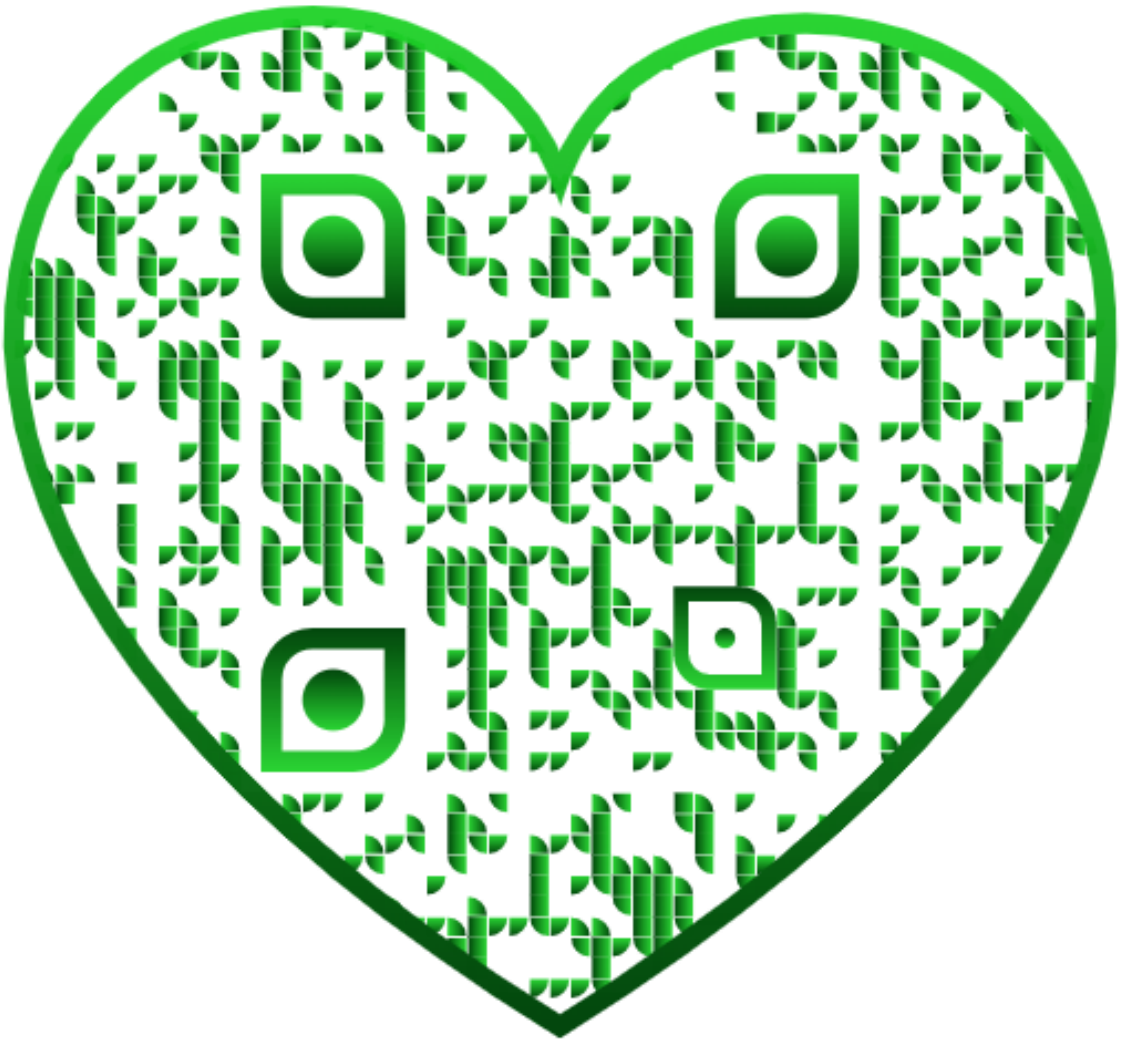
The THANKSGIVING Issue

bon appétit



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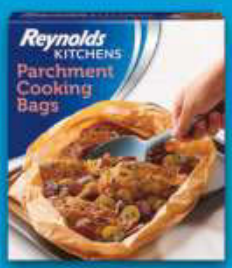

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PHOTOGRAPH BY TRAVIS RAINEY

MAKE THE holidays MEMORABLE

This Thanksgiving, make every bite mouthwatering with McCormick Turkey Gravy. Its smooth richness and perfect blend of spices will have everyone racing to the table, ready to dig in.

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Wok-firing bok choy at Khói Barbecue, one of Houston's best spots for pho.
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PHOTOGRAPH BY ARTURO OLMOS

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From the Editor

Editor in chief Jamila Robinson shares what's on her mind this month

We dove into the Bon Appétit archives for our turkey inspiration. P. 54

"What are you doing for Thanksgiving?"

I have been asking myself this question since late summer as I sort through my work calendar, restaurant openings, and vacation schedules. My family asks too, and my friends remind me of their standing invites. I'm still not quite sure as I write this letter.

I have been traveling the last few Thanksgivings—usually for work—and have had to send kind wishes through group chats and swoon over turkey and dressing and dishes of macaroni and cheese on FaceTime. Figuring out what I'm going to do every year has challenged what was always tradition: heading home for Thanksgiving. But one year I caught up with my dear friend over a long, lazy lunch at one of the world's finest restaurants. Another year I was on a plane somewhere. Another year, at a neighbor's house, though it did feel odd to trade my hostess apron for a guest's chair.

Although I have been too busy to host Thanksgiving in recent years, it's still my favorite holiday. I love being in the kitchen with the smells of celery and sage, cinnamon and clove, and rolling out dough for yeast rolls between my fingers. I can quickly end a canned versus fresh cranberry sauce debate with Bon Appétit's gorgeous Cranberry-Lime Tart from the archives.

Over the past few decades, Thanksgiving has become more about peace, grace, and friendship, where we celebrate our chosen people and our family ties. Even if I'm not at home, I still feel the connection and intimacy I'm thankful for. We've also moved away from culinary conventions with access to spices and produce from all over the world, allowing us to make Thanksgiving dinner whatever we want.

Tradition, after all, is also something we create.

A few years ago I invited some friends of a friend to Thanksgiving dinner and asked them to bring side dishes they loved. As immigrants mostly from Europe and South America, they didn't believe this American holiday was "for them," or that their dishes would be appropriate. But their soups, ceviches, and paellas sat beautifully alongside my herb-roasted turkey and potatoes dauphinoise, making them more connected to this US tradition. Being part of a welcoming, inclusive environment is what I want to do every Thanksgiving.

PHOTOGRAPH BY TRAVIS RAINEY (PORTRAIT)

Thanksgiving Hot Takes and Tips

CALL IT SIDESGIVING

This is really what we want anyway: lots of sides, variations of ones we know, and ones we didn't know we needed, like the spicy squash on p. 67. Tip: Stay on auntie's good side. Rather than replace a beloved family recipe, add a new side to try.

CHOOSE A SMALL TURKEY

Tackling your first turkey? I recommend Shilpa Uskokovic's choice of a small bird (12 to 14 pounds) on p. 54. Slightly larger than a duck or chicken, it cooks faster and feels familiar. Hot take: The skin does not have to be crispy. You've got gravy.

CAKE IS THE NEW PIE

I'm a certifiable pie person. But if you want to impress guests and be on trend with the cake parties we saw all year, make one, or all, of the cakes on pp. 74–75. Hot take: The chocolate-pumpkin cake is the stronger case for canned pumpkin than pie.

PHOTOGRAPH BY LUCIA BELL-EPSTEIN. FOOD STYLING BY PEARL JONES. PROP STYLING BY ERICA LUTZ.

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Table Talk

RESTAURANTS, TRAVEL, *and* FOOD FOR THOUGHT

A loaded bowl at Phở Prime. *P.14*

TASTE OF THE TOWN: HOUSTON'S BEST PHO

Also, a packed day with Padma Lakshmi, a showstopping mushroom main, and a no-sweat Brie galette.

Pho Frenzy

A bowl of pho is as essential to Houston dining as a platter of barbecue. These are *Houston Chronicle* restaurant critic Bao Ong's favorite versions.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ARTURO OLMOS

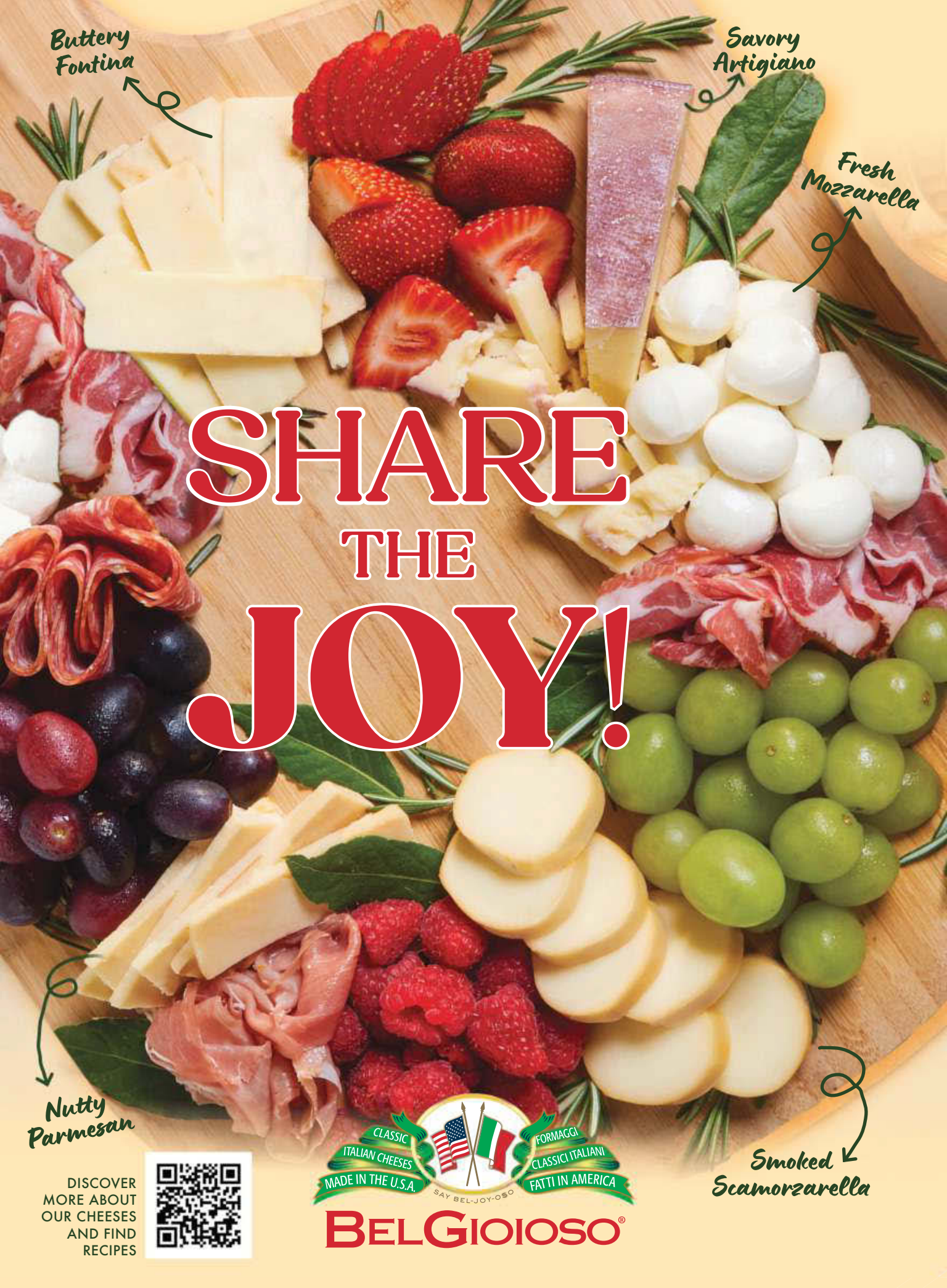
Few dishes better capture Houston's spirit than a steaming bowl of pho. The iconic Vietnamese noodle soup is as much a staple as smoky brisket or gooey queso. It's an essential dish woven into the fabric of the Bayou City. Houstonians eat pho for breakfast as eagerly as they do past midnight, in suburban strip mall restaurants and banquet halls and at backyard pop-ups.

A classic preparation of pho begins with a clear, deeply savory broth poured over springy rice noodles, topped with slices of rare beef, brisket, or tendon. On the side there's usually a platter of bean sprouts, Thai basil, and lime wedges for customizing each bite. While the dish's origins are murky, it's generally believed to have roots in northern Vietnam. Pho bo, or beef pho, is the most common version of the soup, but it varies from north to south: In Hanoi the recipe calls for a minimalist broth with a whisper of star anise and cinnamon, while the version in Saigon is often sweeter and served with more garnishes.

No matter the variations, pho in America serves as a connection to home for the Vietnamese diaspora. In Houston, home to one of the largest Vietnamese communities stateside, second- and third-generation cooks embrace tradition and experimentation with equal enthusiasm. Some restaurants only sell pho ga, a lighter riff using chicken, while others incorporate barbecue and other modern innovations to create distinctly Houstonian spins on the dish.

As award-winning food writer Andrea Nguyen wrote in *The Pho Cookbook*, the national dish of Vietnam "is about tradition as much as it is about change." Nowhere is this more true than in Houston.

Dialing in the finishing touches at Moon Rabbit.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Up close and personal with Hương Sen's vegetarian pho.

PHỞ SAPA

11698 Bellaire Blvd.

If there's one restaurant capable of hushing any disagreement about where to find the best pho in Houston, it's this spot tucked into a shopping plaza in Asiatown (Chinatown, to many locals). Owner Hien Luu's family started the restaurant in 2005, focused on serving a pork-based noodle soup, before she took over and began focusing on pho. The scent of fragrant broth wafts from the kitchen into the bright dining room. An array of soups includes the typical pho dac biet, a combination bowl including steak, tendon, and tripe, and less common ones like the aromatic ginger-infused pho tai gung. Regardless of the soup, the restaurant's fresh noodles shine. These thin, soft yet resilient strands made from rice flour set every bowl apart.

HƯƠNG SEN

12345 Bellaire Blvd., #B2

A handful of Houston's pho-centric restaurants serve vegetarian versions of Vietnam's national dish, but few places reach the same standard as chef-owner Tien Huynh's Asiatown restaurant. Huynh, a devout Buddhist, opened Hương Sen in 2019 so patrons could enjoy a vegetarian meal in a Zen-like room. Here you're surrounded by customers that include monks from local temples in a serene dining room filled with bamboo, lotus-shaped light fixtures, and statues of the Buddha. Almost everyone orders the pho. This meat-free recipe comes to life with tofu, faux ham, and all the usual herbs. The amber-colored mushroom-based broth carries the gentle sweetness of star anise. It's more layered and complex than many beef versions that simmer for hours.

KHÓI BARBECUE

2911 Hardy St.

At his pop-up restaurant, Don Nguyen reimagines Texas-style barbecue with global influences. His concept started as a way to explore his Vietnamese heritage, and he doles out hits like sausage links inspired by bo la lot (grilled beef wrapped in lolot leaves) to a parade of enthusiastic diners. Barbecue shows up in velvety curries and garlic fried rice. His pho stands out with its beefy broth, layered with smoke from the charred aromatics and fall-apart brisket. Some customers order ahead online while others line the sidewalk outside a home in the Near Northside where Nguyen sets up on weekends. Picnic tables are in place to slurp down those deeply satisfying bowls—even during a Houston heat wave. The pho embodies the spirit of khói, which means "smoke" in Vietnamese: a culinary venture at once unapologetically Vietnamese and Texan.

A satisfying slurp at Khói Barbecue.

MOON RABBIT

605 W 19th St.

At Moon Rabbit, banh xeo, a crisp crepe filled with shrimp, pork belly, and coconut cream, is presented as a tostada. An espresso martini takes on the bold profile of robusta beans typically used in ca phe sua da. But when it comes to pho, co-chefs Tam Nguyen (whose family also ran a Vietnamese restaurant for nearly three decades) and Rudy Vasquez honor tradition at this modern Vietnamese restaurant in Houston's Heights neighborhood. Whether it's the pho dac biet or pho tai chin, which includes lean tenderloin and supple brisket, the aromatic broth is subtle in its layers of spice. No bottles of sweet hoisin and spicy sriracha anchor the table. Staffers will insist with a smile that the broth doesn't really need it.

NOODLE ON THIS

The enduring debate over the "right" way to eat pho

In Hanoi, the expectation when eating pho is to add nothing but green onions. In the Southern Vietnamese style, you might squeeze in lime and add herbs gradually so they stay bright. Hoisin and sriracha are generally used as dipping sauces—though some diners douse their broth. Chefs and enthusiasts argue endlessly about all of this. But here's the beautiful truth: Pho is a DIY affair. No matter what anyone says about how you garnish your bowl or season your broth, there are no hard-and-fast rules on how to enjoy pho.

ĐI ĂN PHỞ

12934 Bellaire Blvd., #108

This newly opened pho shop has a more modern feel than many of its well-established Asiatown neighbors. The dining room features rattan-style lighting and a wall lined with coffee, fish sauce, and sriracha. A short menu focuses solely on pho. You can often watch 70-year-old chef Hung Van Tran ladling shimmering golden broth into bowls from the open kitchen. A server will proudly tell you that the beef bones simmer overnight, leaving barely a trace of fat. The chicken version, pho ga, shows off a consommé-like base with a gingery kick. Tran inspects each bowl before it arrives at your table. Every detail feels intentional, not just in the fresh ingredients, but in thoughtful touches like letting diners take home a handsome pair of wooden chopsticks after their meal.

CƠM GÀ THƯƠNG HẢI

4010 North Sam Houston Pkwy. W.

Between a tangle of freeway overpasses, next to a gas station, is one of the few Vietnamese restaurants in Houston specializing in poultry. Diana Ho, who immigrated to the US in 1998, says her love for Vietnam's chicken dishes inspired her to open the North Houston restaurant with business partner Khoa Nguyen. They feature chicken and duck in overflowing rice plates, congee, and banana flower salads. Besides an order of shaking beef, there's no pork or seafood to be found. Pho ga arrives as a crystal clear broth cradling a mound of rice noodles and gently poached chicken. The meat is shredded into paper-thin wisps that float on the surface like confetti. It may not be as popular as pho bo, but this light soup is just as satisfying.

PHỞ PRIME

Multiple locations

Kiet Duong and Julie Nguyen built a following with the success of their Viet-Cajun restaurant Crawfish Cafe. At their two locations of Phở Prime, they continue to pay tribute to Texas-inspired flavors. Of their nearly two dozen variations of pho, two protein-packed servings in metal bowls steal the spotlight: The Cowboy includes slices of smoked brisket, Fred Flintstone–size short ribs, and bouncy meatballs. For the Prime, they throw in a marrowbone that amps up the bold and beefy flavor of the soup. Families share these bowls in the sleek, plant-lined dining room on the other side of an open kitchen where cooks assemble each order. It's equal parts Vietnamese comfort food and Lone Star spectacle.

ÔNG JAS VIET KITCHEN

11930 Broadway St., Suite 140

Chef Jas Phan, who also runs Migo Saigon Street Food in Asiatown with his wife, Thanh Nguyen, brings theatrical flair to pho. He serves his steaming, fragrant soups in dramatically sizzling stone bowls. Wisps of steam add to the ambiance of the colorful dining room lined with communal tables and hanging fish sculptures. Each volcanic bowl arrives bubbling furiously. The noodles, filet mignon, brisket, meatballs, and herbs are served on the side. Diners can add the ingredients all at once or little by little—so the noodles don't get soggy and the meat cooks just so. This pho has gone viral online, rightfully wooing diners while honoring its Vietnamese roots.

BRING HOUSTON HOME:
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Chef Tran takes a break at Di An Pho.

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Dinner Is Served

Remix seasonal staples with weekday-ready twists, like pumpkin purée in a hearty beef chili, pecans and brussels sprouts in a spicy sausage pasta, and more

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ELLIOTT JEROME BROWN JR.

SWEET-AND-SOUR CRANBERRY CHICKEN STIR-FRY

Make sure to buy jellied cranberry sauce, not the whole-berry kind, for this dish. While they might look similar, the former will result in a smooth and glossy glaze (the berries in the other will clump it up).

RECIPE BY JESSE SZEWCZYK

4 SERVINGS

- 1 cup jellied cranberry sauce (from a 14-oz. can)
- 3 Tbsp. unseasoned rice vinegar
- 2 tsp. finely grated orange zest
- ¼ cup fresh orange juice
- 2 tsp. toasted sesame oil
- 3 Tbsp. soy sauce, divided
- 1 lb. skinless, boneless chicken breasts, halved crosswise, thinly sliced against the grain
- 1 Tbsp. cornstarch
- 4 Tbsp. (or more) vegetable oil, divided
- 1 lb. green beans, trimmed
- 6 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 1 ½" piece ginger, peeled, finely chopped
- Kosher salt
- Thinly sliced orange zest and toasted sesame seeds (for serving)
- Steamed white rice (for serving; optional)

1. Whisk cranberry sauce, vinegar, grated orange zest, orange juice, sesame oil, and 2 Tbsp. soy sauce in a small bowl until jelly is mostly dissolved (some lumps are okay); set sauce aside.

2. Toss chicken, cornstarch, and remaining 1 Tbsp. soy sauce in a medium bowl until chicken is well coated; set aside.

3. Heat 2 Tbsp. vegetable oil in a large skillet over high. Cook green beans, tossing very occasionally, until tender and deeply browned in spots, 6–8 minutes. Using tongs, transfer to a large bowl.

4. Heat remaining 2 Tbsp. vegetable oil in same pan. Arrange reserved chicken in a single layer and cook, tossing very occasionally, until golden brown and cooked through, about 5 minutes. Transfer to bowl with green beans.

5. If pan is dry, add more vegetable oil (up to 2 Tbsp.). Add garlic and ginger and cook, stirring constantly, until fragrant, about 1 minute. Add reserved sauce; cook, stirring, until thickened slightly, about 1 minute. Return green beans and chicken to pan; toss to coat.

6. Remove stir-fry from heat; season with salt. Top with sliced orange zest and sesame seeds. Serve with rice if desired.

FOOD STYLING BY MICAH MORTON. PROP STYLING BY EMMA RINGNESS.

SPICED BEEF AND PUMPKIN CHILI

While there is an entire can of puréed pumpkin in this hearty two-bean stew, it all but disappears, adding richness, body, and an autumnal hue without detracting from the fragrant spices, aromatics, and ground beef.

RECIPE BY KENDRA VACULIN

4 SERVINGS

- 2 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 onion, coarsely chopped
- 1 medium jalapeño, coarsely chopped, plus more thinly sliced for serving
- 4 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- 1 15-oz. can pumpkin purée
- 2 tsp. smoked paprika
- 1½ tsp. ground cumin
- 1 lb. ground beef
- 2 tsp. Diamond Crystal or 1¼ tsp. Morton kosher salt
- 3 Tbsp. Worcestershire sauce, divided
- Freshly ground pepper
- 1 15-oz. can black beans, rinsed
- 1 15 oz. can pinto beans, rinsed
- 4 cups low-sodium chicken broth
- Sour cream and unsalted, roasted pumpkin seeds (pepitas; for serving)

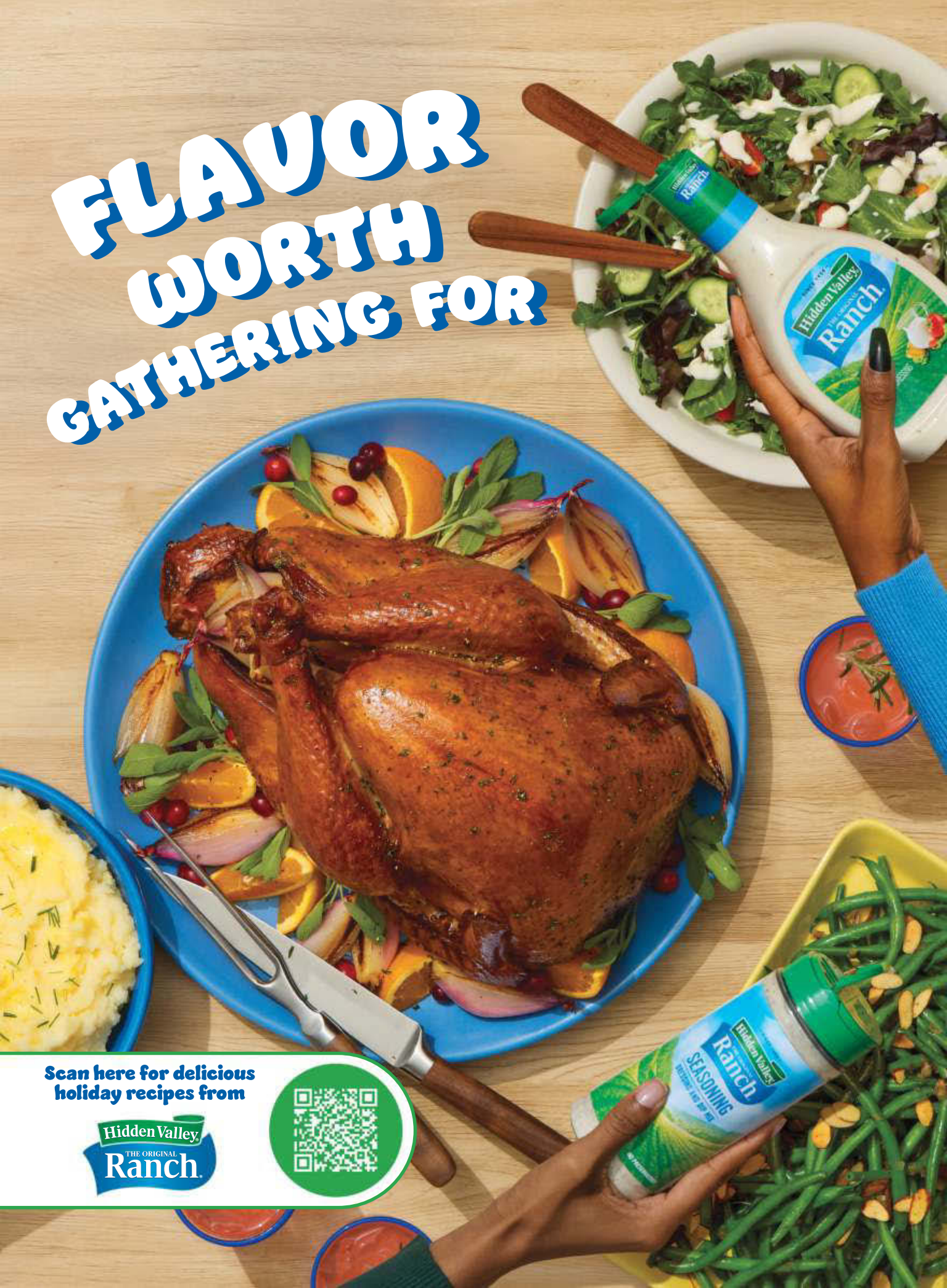
1. Heat oil in a medium Dutch oven or other heavy pot over medium-high. Add onion and chopped jalapeño; cook, stirring often, until slightly softened, 3–4 minutes.

2. Add garlic and cook, stirring often, until fragrant, about 1 minute. Add pumpkin purée, paprika, and cumin and cook, stirring often, until some of the liquid in purée has evaporated, 3–4 minutes.

3. Add ground beef, salt, and 2 Tbsp. Worcestershire sauce; season generously with pepper. Cook, breaking up beef with a wooden spoon and stirring often, until meat is cooked through and incorporated into purée to create a thick paste, about 5 minutes.

4. Add black beans, pinto beans, and broth. Increase heat to high and bring to a boil. Reduce heat so mixture is at a simmer and cook, stirring occasionally, until thickened to the consistency of chili, 15–18 minutes. Stir in remaining 1 Tbsp. Worcestershire sauce.

5. To serve, ladle chili into bowls and top each with a dollop of sour cream; scatter pumpkin seeds and sliced jalapeños over.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ROSEMARY AND DRIED CHERRY PORK CHOPS

Rehydrating dried cherries in hot water turns them plump and juicy, ideal for lending a sweet-tart balance to a rosemary-scented pan sauce.

RECIPE BY KENDRA VACULIN

2 SERVINGS

- ⅓ cup dried tart cherries
- 2 1"–1¼"-thick bone-in pork chops (10–12 oz. each)
- Kosher salt, freshly ground pepper
- 3 Tbsp. all-purpose flour
- 2 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 large shallot, thinly sliced
- 4 Tbsp. unsalted butter, divided
- 2 cups low-sodium chicken broth
- 2 Tbsp. Dijon mustard
- 1 Tbsp. balsamic vinegar
- 2 sprigs rosemary

1. Combine cherries and ½ cup hot water in a small bowl. Let sit to rehydrate while you cook the pork.

2. Pat pork chops dry with paper towels. Season generously on both sides with salt and pepper. Sprinkle flour evenly over both sides of each chop; press in gently to coat lightly.

3. Heat oil in a large cast-iron skillet over medium-high. Shake off any excess flour and cook pork chops until deep golden brown underneath, about 5 minutes. Turn and cook until deep golden brown on other side and an instant-read thermometer inserted into the thickest part registers 135°, about 2 minutes, depending on thickness of chops. Transfer to a plate. Let pan cool slightly.

4. Combine shallot and 2 Tbsp. butter in same pan and cook over medium heat, stirring often, until shallot is softened, about 2 minutes. Add broth, mustard, vinegar, and reserved cherries with their liquid. Cook, stirring constantly, until slightly reduced, about 5 minutes. Add rosemary sprigs and cook, stirring often, until sauce thickens further and is homogeneous, about 5 minutes. Remove from heat, add remaining 2 Tbsp. butter, and vigorously stir to combine. Taste sauce and season with salt and pepper.

5. To serve, nestle pork chops back into sauce in pan and spoon some sauce over.

PASTA WITH BRUSSELS SPROUTS AND BUTTERY PECANS

Autumnal flavors reign supreme in this quick but hearty pasta dish. If the brand of Italian sausage you're using isn't very spicy, go ahead and add more crushed red pepper flakes—the vegetal brussels sprouts and rich pecans can handle quite a bit of heat.

RECIPE BY KENDRA VACULIN

4 SERVINGS

- 1 lb. brussels sprouts
- 1 lb. mezze rigatoni or other medium pasta
- Kosher salt
- 6 Tbsp. unsalted butter, divided
- 4 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 1 cup coarsely chopped raw pecans
- ¼ tsp. crushed red pepper flakes
- 1 lb. hot Italian sausage, casings removed if needed
- 3 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- 1 oz. Pecorino, finely grated (about ½ cup), plus more for serving
- Freshly ground pepper
- 2 Tbsp. red wine vinegar

1. Trim root ends from brussels sprouts, letting any larger outer leaves fall off. Place leaves in a medium bowl. Coarsely chop remaining sprouts and transfer to same bowl as leaves; set aside.

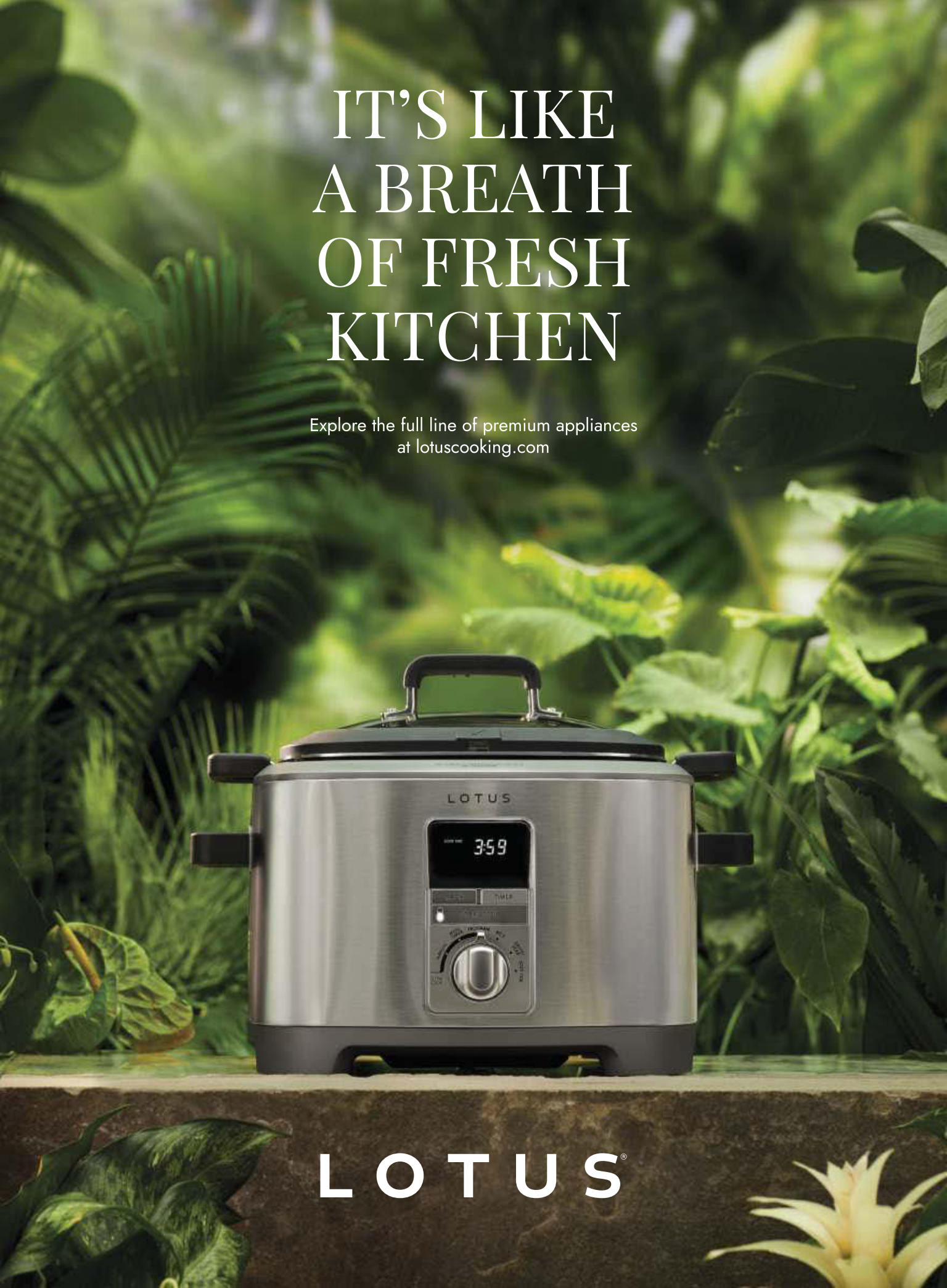
2. Cook pasta in a large pot of boiling salted water, stirring occasionally, until very al dente, about 2 minutes less than package directions. Drain, reserving 2 cups pasta cooking liquid.

3. Heat 4 Tbsp. butter and 2 Tbsp. oil in a medium Dutch oven or other heavy pot over medium-high until butter is melted. Add pecans and cook, stirring constantly, until nuts are darkened in color and fragrant and butter mixture browns (it will be slightly darker than plain brown butter because of the pecans), about 2 minutes. Transfer to a medium bowl, stir in red pepper flakes, and season with salt. Wipe out pot.

4. Heat remaining 2 Tbsp. oil in same pot over medium-high. Cook sausage, breaking up with a wooden spoon, until browned and cooked through, about 5 minutes. Add garlic and reserved brussels sprouts; season with salt. Cook, stirring occasionally, until brussels sprouts are slightly wilted, 2–3 minutes.

5. Add pasta, 1 cup reserved pasta cooking liquid, 1 oz. Pecorino, and remaining 2 Tbsp. butter; season generously with black pepper. Cook, stirring constantly and adding more pasta cooking liquid as needed, until pasta is coated and sauce is glossy, 2–3 minutes. Remove pasta from heat and stir in vinegar. Taste and season with more salt if needed.

6. Divide pasta among shallow bowls and top with buttery pecans, dividing evenly, and more Pecorino.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Since printing our first issue in 1956, *Bon Appétit* has published tens of thousands of recipes. It would take literal decades to cook them all. So our editors handpicked the 56 recipes you must make this year, from weeknight-ready meatballs to an instant-classic chocolate cake. You can find the entire collection on our website by scanning the QR code below, and we'll be highlighting a staff favorite each month in print. Let's cook!

PHOTOGRAPH BY ISA ZAPATA

JAPANESE CURRY

WHY WE LOVE IT

A true one-pot wonder, former staffer Christina Chaey's veggie curry is in regular rotation at my house during the chilliest months of the year. Texturally, it hits every comforting note: Custardy kabocha squash mingles with hearty mushrooms in a silky turmeric-and-cumin-laced stew. It's a riff on one of Chaey's favorite dishes, kare raisu (Japanese curry rice). She uses S&B curry powder and garam masala to recreate its nostalgic flavors without the premade curry blocks often used to make the dish. It's flexible too. Try Japanese sweet potatoes in place of the squash or nutty cauliflower for the mushrooms. Served with a steaming portion of tender white rice, it warms you up from the inside out. *—Mallary Santucci*

4 SERVINGS

- 4 Tbsp. unsalted butter
- ¼ cup all-purpose flour
- ¼ cup S&B curry powder
- 2 tsp. garam masala
- 3 Tbsp. vegetable oil, divided
- 8 oz. mixed mushrooms (such as maitake, royal trumpet, shiitake, and/or crimini), sliced into 2" pieces
- Kosher salt, freshly ground pepper
- 1 large onion, finely chopped
- 1 medium carrot, peeled, sliced on a diagonal ½" thick
- 2 celery stalks, sliced on a diagonal ½" thick
- 3 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 1 1" piece ginger, peeled, finely chopped
- 6 cups low-sodium vegetable broth
- 12 oz. kabocha squash, scrubbed, or other winter squash, peeled, halved, seeds removed, cut into 1" pieces (about 2½ cups)
- 1 Tbsp. plus 1 tsp. honey
- Cooked short-grain rice and thinly sliced scallions (for serving)

Melt butter in a small saucepan over medium heat. Whisk in flour and cook, whisking often, until roux is golden, 5–8 minutes. Add curry powder and garam masala and cook, stirring, until fragrant, about 1 minute. Set roux aside.

Heat 2 Tbsp. oil in a large saucepan over medium-high. Cook mushrooms, tossing occasionally, until golden brown, about 5 minutes; season with salt and pepper. Transfer to a small bowl.

Heat remaining 1 Tbsp. oil in same pan over medium. Add onion, carrot, and celery and season with salt and pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally, until vegetables are slightly softened and onion is translucent, 6–8 minutes. Add garlic and ginger; cook, stirring, until fragrant, about 2 minutes. Pour in broth; bring to a boil. Reduce heat so liquid is at a gentle simmer. Add squash and return mushrooms to pan. Cook until liquid is reduced by a third and vegetables are very tender, 20–25 minutes.

Add honey and reserved roux; whisk until roux is smooth. Simmer, whisking occasionally, until sauce is thick enough to coat a spoon, 5–10 minutes. Taste and season curry with more salt if needed.

Divide rice and curry among shallow bowls; top with scallions.

DO AHEAD: Curry can be made 4 days ahead; let cool. Transfer to an airtight container; cover and chill.

FOOD STYLING BY MICAH MORTON. PROP STYLING BY PAIGE HICKS.

Scan the QR code to see the full Bon Appétit 56 and to access our archive of more than 60,000 recipes.

Padma Goes

The tireless author and host gives us a hometown tour

BY KHUSHBU SHAH ■ PHOTOGRAPHS BY AMIR HAMJA

Padma Lakshmi was determined to never host a cooking competition ever again. But after taking a few days to relax by a beach, she was heading off to film *America's Culinary Cup*, the new cooking competition show set to air on CBS next year.

Lakshmi, who spent nearly 17 years hosting and executive-producing *Top Chef* before stepping down in 2023, was, understandably, exhausted by the format. "I didn't really want to come back to the genre," she says. "I just felt like I was part of the legacy of a show that's so beloved and so successful and really felt like the gold standard." But CBS made an offer Lakshmi could not refuse: the chance to create and design the cooking competition show of her dreams.

Though she'll serve as the onscreen host, Lakshmi is most excited about her off-camera role as the show's creator. "I spent a lot of time talking about the cinematography and visual language of the show," she explains. Her years of experience shaped the format of the project—though she's mum on the details, it will be devoid of the things that bother her the most about cooking competitions. "It's actually taking away all the bells and whistles, stripping the competition down to focus on the purity of cooking."

Once *America's Culinary Cup* wraps filming, she will begin promoting her new cookbook, *Padma's All American*. Available this November, it's a book seven years in the making—the proposal influenced her popular travel show *Taste the Nation*.

"Some of it's personal, some of it's from *Top Chef*, but all the photographs that you see in the book—other than the beauties of the recipes—were all shot on the road," she says. In addition to curating rigorously tested recipes, she leans into storytelling, too, with essays and profiles of people she meets along the way. "It's the last five years of my life on the road."

Lakshmi sees the book as her call to action to get Americans to learn more about the food and the people around them. Her voice oscillates between excitement and a gentle nervousness as she explains her hopes for how people receive the project, especially at this tense political and cultural moment. It's a crucial part of what she sees as her life's mission. "I hope to make people curious about the food they eat, to make people curious about the foods other people eat, to cook for themselves and their families more, to be enticed."

Though Lakshmi's travel schedule is nonstop, she values her time at home in New York City the most. Lakshmi finds a deep pleasure in revisiting spots that she has loved for years, speaking about each as if they are old, dear friends.

KALUSTYAN'S

"To me, Kalustyan's is the best store in the world, bar none. It's so inspiring to be there, it's where I get all my spices," says Lakshmi, who grew up going to the beloved shop, especially when there were no Indian stores outside Queens. "When I don't know what to cook, I just stroll the aisles. And when I was traveling around the world, craving Indian food in the middle of Paris—as one does—they would ship me spices I couldn't find," she recalls with a laugh. "Every spice in any recipe in my book you can buy from Kalustyan's."

"To me, Kalustyan's is the best store in the world, bar none. It's so inspiring to be there, it's where I get all my spices," says Lakshmi, who grew up going to the beloved shop.

MAKEUP BY FATIMOT ISADARE. HAIR BY CLAY NIELSEN.

I hope to make people curious about the food they eat, to make people curious about the foods other people eat, to cook for themselves and their families more, to be enticed.

IL POSTO ACCANTO

"It's a tiny little wine bar that has been there since the '90s," Lakshmi says. "I used to live right down the block and would hold all my meetings and interviews there. I spent my 20s living in Italy, and their food reminds me so much of Roman trattorias. It's not pretentious, and they have a lot of great wines by the glass. I see a lot of regulars there, it's my Cheers. I actually put their amatriciana recipe in the new book."

IL LABORATORIO DEL GELATO

This Willy Wonka–esque shop on the Lower East Side is known for its dozens of rotating gelato varieties. "It's not what you think of as an ice cream store—it's all beige. If you took a kid there, they'd be like, Where are we?" says Lakshmi, who is particularly fond of their celery and fennel flavors. "We're often nearby doing a lot of shopping, and my facialist is down the street. A facial, some celery ice cream. Perfect."

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JAMMY BRIE GALETTE

This five-ingredient snack is ready for all your holiday parties

BY KENDRA VACULIN ▲ PHOTOGRAPH BY TRAVIS RAINEY

Every dinner party, even those with the most robust menus, requires a little something for people to snack on when they arrive. Thanksgiving, the Olympics of dinner parties, is no different. If you're like me and find it hard to convince yourself to squeeze anything more complicated than a cheese plate onto an already lengthy to-do list, then you'll appreciate this breezy galette. It's basically a cheese plate in pastry form.

Inspired by the baked Brie my mom used to set out at her holiday gatherings, it requires just five ingredients and five minutes before it hits the oven. Imagine a slick of sweet jam (you can use whatever you've got, but I'm particularly fond of fig or apricot), a layer of thinly sliced Brie, a few cracks of black pepper, and a couple sprigs of woodsy thyme tucked here and there, all on that same sheet of store-bought puff.

As the galette bakes, the cheese melts, the jam bubbles, and the crust gets crispy and golden brown—a sweet-savory insurance policy for peckish guests, and a gift to yourself at the end of the night if you happen to discover one leftover slice while you're doing the dishes.

HERE'S HOW TO MAKE IT

Roll out **1 thawed sheet frozen puff pastry (one 14-oz. package or half of a 17.3-oz. package, such as Pepperidge Farm)** on a surface lightly dusted with **all-purpose flour** to a 13×11" rectangle. Transfer to a parchment-lined baking sheet. Using a paring knife, lightly score a rectangle in pastry 1½" in from edges. Prick pastry inside border in several places with a fork. Spread **½ cup jam** over, staying within border. Top jam with **8 oz. Brie, thinly sliced**. Break up **3–4 thyme sprigs** and scatter over; season with **freshly ground pepper**. Fold pastry at score marks up and over filling, tucking and pleating as needed, to form an edge of crust around galette. Lightly beat **1 large egg** in a small bowl to blend and brush over exposed crust. Bake galette in a 375° oven until pastry is puffed, golden brown, and crisp, 30–40 minutes. Let galette cool before slicing. *8–10 servings*

FOOD STYLING BY THU BUSER. PROP STYLING BY LINDEN ELSTRAN.

Vibing With Vermouth

It's low-effort, low-proof, and built for a meal teeming with side dishes

BY JOSEPH HERNANDEZ ♦ PHOTOGRAPH BY TRAVIS RAINEY

Thanksgiving is our favorite maximalist holiday, and we're not about to let a day filled with gratitude and abundance go the way of overwhelm. Ensure a simple-enough menu stays manageable with a to-do list so you're not waylaid by days-long side quests. Skip over the dish pileup with a groovy playlist and designate some helpers to wash and dry before dinner is even served. And what about the premeal cocktail hour? We have another simple fix: Leave the "signature" cocktail to another gathering. This year it's just vermouth on the menu.

Specifically, stock up on Spanish vermouth, a.k.a. vermut, a fortified wine that's spiced, often sweet, and designed for drinking straight. In Spain, where la hora del vermut is a beloved premeal ritual akin to Italy's aperitivo, vermut culture has evolved to embrace myriad styles, especially leaning into luscious fruit profiles and richer textures. Think inky cola-esque bottles; floral, blush rosé vermuts; or even cinnamon-and-licorice-tinged vermut negro.

Slightly sweeter than its French or Italian cousins, Spanish vermut is also soft, herbal, and luxurious. It's a drink with presence: notes of clove, cinnamon, orange peel, wormwood, even a hint of Dr Pepper, if you're into that sort of thing.

Unlike the highly operationalized holiday Thanksgiving is often purported to be, at its core it's a feast with the people we care about most. Vermut is a natural accompanist to such an event. It does not ask to be in the spotlight, in cocktails or otherwise. At its absolute best, vermut embraces the art of the pause, an invitation to slow down with nothing more complicated than an ice cube and an orange slice.

CASA MARIOL VERMUT NEGRE *$29*
This ebony offering is sold in a stylish glass bottle that belies its complex makeup. The aromatic base of Macabeo grapes gets its color from unripe green walnuts, macerated with 150 botanicals before being aged in oak for six months. The resulting beverage reminds us of Spain's famous kalimotxo cocktail (simply, red wine topped with Coca-Cola), charming without being complicated.

Pro tip: Vermouth poured over sorbet or gelato is an elegant update to the classic ice cream float.

FOOD STYLING BY THU BUSER. PROP STYLING BY LINDEN ELSTRAN.

PRIMITIVO QUILES VERMOUTH ROJO *$25*
This vermouth is light on its feet, with a dusty, velvety finish. The family-owned winery dates back to the 1700s, and this bottle follows a treasured secret recipe. Made with aromatic Monastrell grapes, it rocks lightly earthy flavors rounded out by ripe raspberry sweetness.

CUEVA NUEVA VERMUT *$21*
Wormwood, rosemary, cloves, and 80-plus other botanicals go into this silky, sophisticated vermut. A few months in French oak contribute body and some tasty vanilla notes—just bust out the good ice cubes and a smattering of garnishes (olives, anchovies, citrus rinds) and you've got yourself a refined but casual vermouth station.

Family Meal

Chefs **Amanda Shulman** and **Alex Kemp** on their kitchen built for three

BY KATE KASSIN • PHOTOGRAPH BY AARON RICHTER

Amanda Shulman and Alex Kemp have had a busy few years in Philadelphia. Shulman debuted Her Place Supper Club in June 2021, and the pair opened Quebecois stunner My Loup in May 2023 with Kemp at the helm. Both restaurants landed on our Best New Restaurants lists in 2022 and 2024, respectively. They married in August 2023 and had their first child, Evie, in January.

For the first time in a long time, they're finding time to cook outside of work. And while their home kitchen is stocked with bottles and baby formula for now, they thoughtfully designed a space that will let them transition to solid foods and shared meals. From a workhorse sink made to tackle an unending stream of dishes to the beloved appliance Shulman also relies on at My Loup (hint: It's got attachments), everything in their home kitchen is both functional and a joy to use.

Standart Pro Utility Sink

$300; kraususa.com

After Evie's arrival, "we're spending a lot of time in our sink," Shulman says. The faucet features a pull-out head and sprayer, which come in handy for blasting everything and anything off pots and pans and getting into all the nooks and crannies of baby-size dishes, utensils, and bottles. The stainless-steel basin is durable and easy to sanitize, and at a full 12" deep, it's got plenty of capacity to fit a load of dishes after family dinner too. Inset with thick rubber padding, the setup is designed to dull clinking and clanging noises from dropped utensils and pans (a dream for nap time).

Breville Barista Express Espresso Machine

$700; crateandbarrel.com

Kemp is the self-proclaimed coffee obsessive of the house and he relies on the Breville to brew their morning caffeine. With customizable settings for dialing in shots, plus an integrated frother, water filter, and adjustable grinder with 16 settings, the machine lets him easily crank out coffee-shop-quality cortados or Americanos without having any real-life barista experience. "If you order something other than that, it's going to be trouble," he says.

KitchenAid Artisan Stand Mixer, 5-qt.

$500; 3-Piece Pasta Roller and Cutter Attachment Set, $250; williams-sonoma.com

A stand mixer is Shulman's favorite tool at work and she's got the same model at home. It's great for mixing up brownies and blondies, but she also uses it to whip soft cheeses into spreadable dips, mash together herb-filled compound butters, and make all kinds of homemade noodles. "We've got all the attachments, the fettuccine one and the regular flat roller," Shulman says, which makes cranking out batch after batch of pasta at home just as easy as it is at My Loup.

Le Creuset Signature Cassadou

$350; lecreuset.com

The duo has been meal prepping more than ever after expanding their family. Their go-tos: cooking big pots of beans and heaps of fluffy quinoa and poaching chicken breasts for salads and sandwiches. Shulman and Kemp use their enameled high-sided Cassadou for nearly everything. The big pot sits evenly on the smooth continuous grates of their Bosch Benchmark Gas Range ($3,249; bosch-home.com), plus "it's tall enough to make a small batch of soup but wide enough for a whole chicken," Shulman says.

A Very Vegetarian Thanksgiving

Turkey or not, the centerpiece of your Thanksgiving spread needs to be special. And a (completely meatless!) mushroom bourguignon is exactly that: It's the kind of celebratory main that invites rapturous applause when it hits the holiday table. Cooked low and slow with red wine and savory porcini stock, it's a luxurious braise fit for the most momentous of occasions.

BY NINA MOSKOWITZ ♦ PHOTOGRAPH BY ELLIOTT JEROME BROWN JR.

MUSHROOM BOURGUIGNON

4–6 SERVINGS

Umami-rich mushrooms get the bourguignon treatment here, an ode to the classic slow-braised beef of France's Burgundy region. The earthy fungi simmer away in a wine-fortified broth bursting with pearl onions and carrots. Dried mushrooms, rehydrated in hot water, are the secret to creating an intense vegetarian broth with a depth similar to a meat one.

- 0.3 oz. dried porcini mushrooms (about ¼ cup) or other dried mushrooms
- 8 Tbsp. (1 stick) unsalted butter, divided
- 2½ lb. mixed mushrooms (such as crimini, button, portobello, and/or baby shiitake), cut into 1" pieces
- 3 Tbsp. all-purpose flour
- 2 large carrots, peeled, sliced ½" thick on a deep diagonal
- 10 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 1 14.4-oz. bag frozen pearl onions
- 2 Tbsp. double-concentrated tomato paste
- 1½ cups dry red wine (such as Burgundy)
- 5 sprigs thyme
- 1 dried bay leaf
- 1 Tbsp. soy sauce
- 2½ tsp. Diamond Crystal or 1½ tsp. Morton kosher salt, plus more
- Freshly ground pepper
- 2 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 8–12 oz. maitake or oyster mushrooms, torn into bite-size pieces
- Mashed potatoes, cooked polenta, or buttered cooked egg noodles (for serving)
- Sherry vinegar or red wine vinegar (for drizzling)

Combine dried porcini mushrooms and 3 cups boiling water in a heatproof bowl and let soak until ready to use.

Melt 2 Tbsp. butter in a large high-sided ovenproof skillet, braiser, or short wide pot (at least 3½ qt.) over high heat. Add half of 1" pieces mixed fresh mushrooms; cook, stirring occasionally, until mushrooms release their liquid and mixture comes to a simmer, 5–7 minutes. Continue to cook, stirring occasionally, until liquid evaporates and mushrooms are golden brown, 6–8 minutes more. Using a slotted spoon, transfer to a medium bowl. Repeat process with another 2 Tbsp. butter and remaining 1" pieces mixed fresh mushrooms.

Return first batch of mushrooms to pan; add flour and cook, stirring often, until incorporated, about 2 minutes (flour may clump). Transfer mushrooms back to medium bowl, scraping pan to include as much flour as possible.

Combine carrots, garlic, pearl onions, and 2 Tbsp. butter in same pan; reduce heat to medium-high. Cook, stirring often, until vegetables are softened around the edges, 6–8 minutes. Add tomato paste and cook, stirring constantly, until deepened in color, about 3 minutes. Pour in wine, scraping up any brown bits, and cook, stirring occasionally, until reduced by about one third, 5–7 minutes.

Add thyme, bay leaf, soy sauce, and 2½ tsp. Diamond Crystal or 1½ tsp. Morton kosher salt to pan. Hold a fine-mesh sieve over and pour reserved dried mushroom soaking liquid through; discard mushrooms in sieve. Season generously with pepper. Bring to a boil, cover, and reduce heat so mixture is at a simmer. Cook, stirring occasionally, until carrots and onions are tender, 45–50 minutes.

Uncover and return reserved cooked mushrooms to pan. Cook, uncovered, stirring occasionally, until mixture thickens slightly and mushrooms are tender, 18–20 minutes.

Meanwhile, heat oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high. Arrange torn maitake mushrooms in a single layer; cook, undisturbed, until deeply browned and crisp underneath, about 5 minutes. Turn and cook until other side is golden, about 4 minutes.

Stir remaining 2 Tbsp. butter into mushroom bourguignon. Remove from heat and season with more salt and/or pepper if needed. Remove thyme and bay leaf; discard. Spoon crispy maitakes on top.

To serve, divide mashed potatoes among plates. Spoon mushroom bourguignon over; drizzle with a little vinegar.

DO AHEAD: Mushroom Bourguignon (without crispy maitakes) can be made 12 hours ahead. Transfer to an airtight container; chill. Bring to a simmer over medium, adding splashes of water to loosen as needed, before serving.

GREAT FOR:
Mushroom lovers, intimate holiday feasts, cozy dinner parties with friends.

SERVE WITH:
Garlic mashed potatoes (p. 60), cheesy polenta, buttered egg noodles.

TO DRINK:
A bit more of that Burgundy you've already got open.

TIME-SAVER:
Make the bourguignon a night ahead—it'll taste even better with time to sit. Just wait to fry the frilly mushroom topping right before serving.

FOOD STYLING BY MICAH MORTON. PROP STYLING BY EMMA RINGNESS.

The Majestic Pecan Pie With Amish Roots

Its gooey pecan layer sits under cushions of custard and whipped cream

BY PERVAIZ SHALLWANI ■ RECIPE BY JOE SEVIER ■ PHOTOGRAPH BY TRAVIS RAINEY

Deep in the Amish and Mennonite communities of Ohio and Indiana, the dessert menu at Das Dutchman Essenhaus, a hospitable chain of family-style restaurants, features a pecan pie of grand design. This is a towering cream pie with a thin layer of pebbly, gooey pecans hidden under cushions of plush custard and whipped cream. Every bite is a surprise.

Essenhaus's Praline Pecan Pie stands out even on a Midwestern menu where more than 30 pies are on offer on any given day. How it ended up on the Essenhaus menu goes back 60 years to a Mennonite gathering in Holmes, Ohio, home to one of America's largest Amish and Mennonite communities.

Mary Miller tasted the pie made by a friend, coincidentally also a Mary Miller. She was taken by its striking appearance and combination of flavors and asked for the recipe. "I like things pretty," she said. "I liked the way it was combined."

Mary tweaked the recipe, particularly, swapping instant vanilla pudding for a homemade version. It became a staple during family holidays.

It ended up on the Essenhaus menu about 20 years ago. Mary's sister, Sue Miller, who owns the restaurant with her husband, Bob, was looking for a new pie offering and thought people would be wowed by the unique praline-topped crust. "I liked the way it's a little crusty at the bottom," Sue Miller said. "If you bake it too long, it gets rock-hard, and if you underbake it, then it gets sticky and chewy."

The pecan layer is added about midway through baking. As the crust finishes, the candied pecan layer sets. Once the shell cools, on goes the brown sugar custard, followed by a layer of homemade whipped cream and hunks of candied pecans. Each slice is a stunning finale to a holiday meal.

Sparking Inspiration
Cooking editor Joe Sevier's experience at an Essenhaus in Indiana sparked our interest in the story behind their desserts. His recipe is an adaptation of the Praline Pecan Cream Pie you'll find on their menu.

FOOD STYLING BY THU BUSER. PROP STYLING BY LINDEN ELSTRAN.

Whipped Cream and Candied Nut Topping

Sour cream adds heft to the whipped cream, giving each piece stability and a balanced flavor. Glazing the nuts in a bit of the gooey pie filling adds sheen and a satisfying crunch.

Brown Sugar Custard

The sliceable, but never dense, layer of custard has a toffee-like flavor and color, born out of a combination of dark brown sugar and a generous splash of vanilla.

Gooey Pecan Layer

This layer is chock-full of finely chopped pecans, and the secret to its success is a dollop of sour cream, which helps prevent crystallization while keeping the pie from becoming overly sweet.

PECAN CREAM PIE

8 SERVINGS

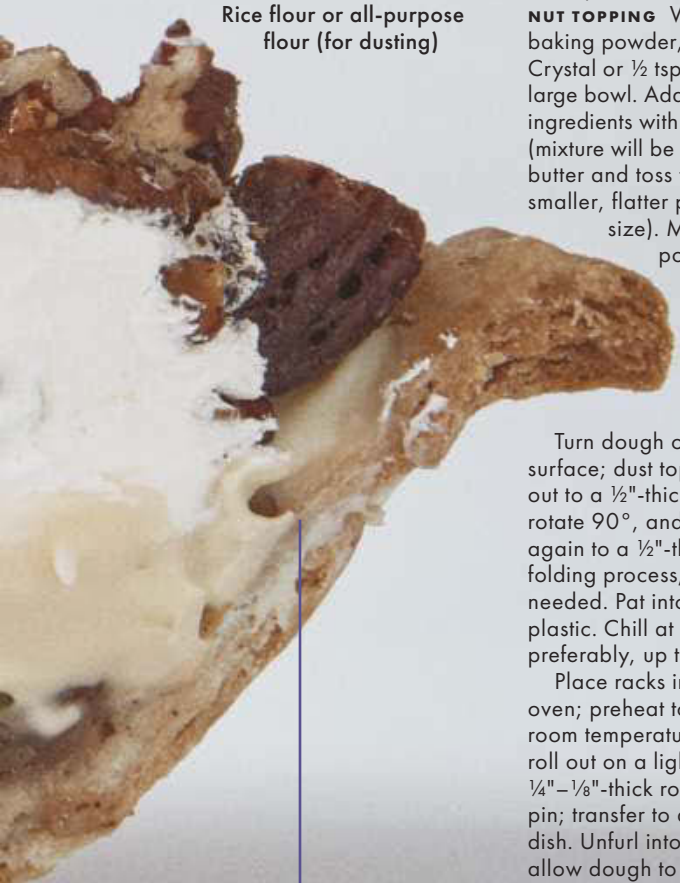
While makeable in an afternoon, this pie is also ideal for dividing the work across several days. On Day 1: Make the dough and chill. Day 2: Roll out and blind-bake the crust; make the candied nut topping; and bake the gooey pecan layer. Day 3: Make the brown sugar custard; whip the cream; assemble the pie; and chill. You could stretch serving to Day 4, but we don't think you'll be able to wait that long.

CRUST, GOOEY PECAN LAYER, AND CANDIED NUT TOPPING

- 1⅔ cups (208 g) all-purpose flour
- ¼ tsp. baking powder
- 2 tsp. Diamond Crystal or 1 tsp. Morton kosher salt, divided
- 2 oz. chilled cream cheese, cut into 1" pieces
- 16 Tbsp. (2 sticks) chilled unsalted butter, sliced ½" thick, divided
- Rice flour or all-purpose flour (for dusting)
- 2 large eggs
- ⅔ cup (packed; 133 g) dark brown sugar
- 2½ cups (300 g) raw pecans
- 2 Tbsp. sour cream
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract

BROWN SUGAR CUSTARD, WHIPPED CREAM, AND ASSEMBLY

- 2½ cups heavy cream, divided
- 1½ cups whole milk, divided
- 6 large egg yolks
- ¾ cup (packed; 150 g) dark brown sugar
- ⅓ cup (40 g) cornstarch
- ½ tsp. Diamond Crystal or ¼ tsp. Morton kosher salt, plus more
- 6 Tbsp. chilled unsalted butter, cut into pieces
- 4 tsp. vanilla extract
- ¼ cup sour cream
- 3 Tbsp. powdered sugar
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract



Crust

Bake the shell 80 percent of the way through before adding the pecan layer for a flaky, deep gold pastry that supports the hefty layers above.

CRUST, GOOEY PECAN LAYER, AND CANDIED NUT TOPPING Whisk all-purpose flour, baking powder, and 1 tsp. Diamond Crystal or ½ tsp. Morton kosher salt in a large bowl. Add cream cheese; rub into dry ingredients with your fingers until combined (mixture will be very shaggy). Add 10 Tbsp. butter and toss to coat, then smash into smaller, flatter pieces (about chickpea size). Make a well in the center; pour in ¼ cup ice water. Toss with a fork or your hands to distribute, then knead dough in bowl a couple of times to bring together (some dry bits may remain).

Turn dough out onto a lightly dusted surface; dust top of dough with flour. Roll out to a ½"-thick rectangle. Fold in half, rotate 90°, and fold in half again. Roll out again to a ½"-thick rectangle and repeat folding process, dusting with more flour as needed. Pat into a ½"-thick disk; wrap in plastic. Chill at least 2 hours and, preferably, up to 12 hours.

Place racks in upper and lower thirds of oven; preheat to 425°. Let dough sit at room temperature 5 minutes. Unwrap and roll out on a lightly floured surface to a ¼"–⅛"-thick round. Wrap around rolling pin; transfer to a standard 9"-diameter pie dish. Unfurl into dish, then lift edges and allow dough to slump down into dish. Trim overhang to 1". Fold overhang under and crimp edges as desired. Prick bottom and sides of dough in several places with a fork. Freeze 15 minutes

Crumple up 2 sheets of parchment paper; smooth out and place over dough. Fill dish with pie weights or dried beans. Set pan on a foil-lined baking sheet and bake crust on lower rack, tenting edges with foil if browning too quickly, until edges are golden brown and bottom is opaque, 35–40 minutes. Remove from oven; reduce oven temperature to 350°. Lift parchment and weights out of pan.

While the crust is baking, whisk eggs, brown sugar, and remaining 1 tsp. Diamond Crystal or ½ tsp. Morton kosher salt in a medium bowl; set aside.

Melt remaining 6 Tbsp. butter in a small saucepan set over medium. Add pecans and cook, stirring gently, until nuts are slightly darkened in color and fragrant, 5–7 minutes. Pour into a fine-mesh sieve set over a small bowl. Transfer ½ cup pecans to another small bowl. Set remaining nuts and brown butter aside.

Add 1 Tbsp. reserved egg mixture to ½ cup pecans; toss to coat. Spread out on a parchment-lined baking sheet; bake on upper rack until dry to the touch and a honeycomb-like texture appears on surface, about 5 minutes. Let candied nuts cool.

Finely chop reserved remaining pecans. Add to remaining egg mixture along with sour cream, vanilla, and reserved brown butter; stir to combine. Scrape into crust and bake on lower rack until gooey pecan layer is mostly set but still jiggles slightly in the center when gently shaken, 15–18 minutes. Transfer pan to a wire rack; let crust with gooey pecan layer cool until barely warm, at least 30 minutes.

DO AHEAD: Pecans can be candied 1 day ahead; store airtight at room temperature. Crust with gooey pecan layer can be baked 1 day ahead; store, covered with foil, at room temperature.

BROWN SUGAR CUSTARD, WHIPPED CREAM, AND ASSEMBLY Heat 1½ cups cream and 1 cup milk in a medium saucepan over medium until steaming, about 2 minutes.

Meanwhile, whisk egg yolks, brown sugar, cornstarch, ½ tsp. Diamond Crystal or ¼ tsp. Morton kosher salt, and remaining ½ cup milk in a medium bowl.

Gradually pour warm cream mixture into egg mixture, whisking constantly until combined. Pour mixture back into pan and cook over medium heat, stirring constantly, until it starts to bubble, then becomes glossy and thick (like pudding), 3–4 minutes. Scrape into a medium bowl, add butter and vanilla, and whisk until butter is melted and custard is emulsified. Cover with plastic wrap, pressing directly onto surface. Let sit at room temperature until crust with gooey pecan layer is cool enough to use.

Uncover custard; whisk to break up any large lumps. Spoon over gooey pecan layer and spread evenly to edges. Cover and chill at least 4 hours and up to 1 day.

Whisk sour cream, powdered sugar, vanilla, a pinch of salt, and remaining 1 cup cream in a medium bowl to medium peaks. Spoon over custard and spread into an even layer. Break candied pecans into large pieces and scatter on top.

DO AHEAD: Pie can be assembled 1 day ahead. Chill.

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THE BON APPÉTIT SHOP

bon appétit

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For Keeps

Thanksgiving is the perfect time to dust off the quirky ornate tableware that can make any place feel like home. Here, *Bon Appétit* staffers share their most-cherished pieces—plus ideas for new treasures with serious keepsake potential.

BY EMILY FARRIS ▲ PHOTOGRAPHS BY ELLIOTT JEROME BROWN JR.
PROP STYLING BY EMMA RINGNESS

KITSCHY COLLECTIBLES

There's no china or silver making its way down my family tree. However, one heirloom has graced every Thanksgiving spread I can remember: the turkey shakers. My grandmother gifted my mother the first pair, and now these ceramic birds are a part of the Thanksgiving table I set in my own home, sure to become a part of my kids' holiday memories too. *—Noah Kaufman, senior commerce editor*

A DAZZLING DESSERT DISPLAY

It wasn't a holiday in my family without a 7Up pound cake glistening under the crystal cut-glass dome that held court on my grandma's countertop. As a child I'd sit with my head in my palms, listening to the clink of the heavy cloche as conversation drifted between the cake stand and the heavens. My grandmother has since passed and different desserts now fill the oversized heirloom, but her memory is still all around us. I feel especially connected to her during the holidays, every time I hear that unmistakable clink. *—Inés Anguiano, associate Test Kitchen manager*

SPECIAL OCCASION NAPKINS

Thanksgiving was one of the first traditions I adopted when I moved to America. The holiday reminded me of the large family dinners we often had back home in India. My version is joyous chaos, filled with boisterous friends, rarely featuring a turkey, often ending with cake. But the one tradition I keep is setting the table just so with my vintage linen napkins. To me these embroidered squares say Thanksgiving more than anything in a Norman Rockwell painting. *—Shilpa Uskokovic, senior Test Kitchen editor*

A BELOVED BAKING DISH
Every year we make my grandmother's mac and cheese. I wish I could prepare it in the Japanese baking dish we used when I was growing up, but unfortunately, I broke it after placing the hot stoneware on a cold surface. One day I'll teach my daughter how to make the mac and cheese in a replacement, remembering my mom's gentle response when her favorite piece shattered: "It's just a dish!"
—Hali Bey Ramdene, content director

COLORFUL GLASSWARE

I'm pretty sure I overdrew my bank account to pay for the turkey the first time I hosted Thanksgiving, which is to say that nice glassware was definitely not in my budget. Still intent on setting a beautiful table, I thrifted enough mismatched amber goblets to serve the random mix of friends, family, and near strangers I'd invited. Two decades later those goblets remain a hallmark of my Thanksgiving dinner—along with an eclectic mix of guests. *—Emily Farris, senior commerce writer*

NEW FESTIVE FAVORITES

Start your own traditions with these stunning statement pieces

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bon appétit

Test kitchen baking experts Jesse Szewczyk and Shilpa Uskokovic share must-make recipes and answer your burning questions.

BA Bake Club

SCAN TO JOIN

PHOTOGRAPHS BY LUCIA BELL-EPSTEIN

THIS IS THANKSGIVING 2025

Every Thanksgiving dinner is an opportunity for reinvention. Precisely because it is a meal steeped in tradition, any little point of differentiation between this year's and the last's feels like a bold, delicious statement. Some brave soul triumphantly takes on the turkey for the first time. Sweetly spiced purple potatoes stop the buffet line in its tracks. An elaborately marbled Bundt dripping with ganache nestled amongst the pies suddenly becomes a dessert table nonnegotiable. Whether you're gathering with your nearest and dearest or surrounded by new faces, there are endless ways to make your mark—and that's something we can all be thankful for. *—Amiel Stanek*

FOOD STYLING BY PEARL JONES.
PROP STYLING BY ERICA LUTZ.

(FINALLY!) TACKLE THE TURKEY

Shilpa Uskokovic has cooked professionally for more than a decade, from Michelin-starred restaurants to the hallowed halls of the Bon Appétit Test Kitchen. There's just one culinary mountain she's never climbed (or, frankly, really wanted to): *the Thanksgiving turkey.* And this is the year that changed.

BY SHILPA USKOKOVIC

If you're reading this it means I finally cooked my very first turkey, an activity I successfully put off for more than 10 years. In that time I enrolled in and graduated from culinary school, cooked in restaurants with Michelin stars, hosted six Thanksgiving dinners, became an editor at this food magazine, and developed hundreds of recipes. Through all of it, I managed to dodge The Big Freaky Chicken (as I had taken to calling it) at every turn. Turkey remained a nemesis I couldn't bring myself to face.

I've never been sure exactly what accounts for my fear of this particular type of poultry. Is it the way the bird slithers disturbingly out of its plastic sheath? Is it the disproportionately large breasts? The severed neck stuffed into the cavity like the calling card of a brutal hit man? Or maybe because the first time I ate turkey I was 10, on holiday at Disneyland, and a group of people walked by wielding smoked turkey legs and I begged my parents to buy me one of these objects that I was fascinated by but didn't yet know the name of. My dad hunted one down for me and I took a bite and immediately hated it but felt too guilty to admit it, so I choked it down with a lemonade, and that taste memory of excitement combined with disappointment and liquid smoke still haunts me. Who can say. All I know is that a few months ago I was eating oysters and I stopped to marvel that a human being, many centuries ago, saw this algae-encrusted shell and tried to eat it, not knowing if they would live or die at the end of this experiment. How brave. How very bold. I, too, desire to be brave and bold. I decided I must wade into uncharted territory. And

WIRE ARTIST: JACQUELINE DRAPER

what better way to exercise my resolve than facing the bird that everyone seems to care so much about this time of year.

And so I combed our vast archive for a recipe. As an otherwise confident cook who has roasted many a chicken, I knew what I was looking for. I wanted a dry brine, infinitely easier than soaking the turkey in a salty, makeshift bath. I also knew I didn't want to cook the animal whole. Sure, it looks very Norman Rockwellian that way, but I wouldn't be able to achieve juicy breasts and tender thighs with a bird of this size—it's simple physics. The only way for me to comfortably deal with this overgrown chicken would be to break it down into manageable parts.

I settled on a recipe we published in 2016 from Ann Redding and Matt Danzer, the chefs of Thai Diner in NYC. It checked every box and came with some additional bonuses, like a bourbon-and-soy glaze that I knew would bake onto the skin like the glossy coat of a tempera painting, and an ingenious confit method for the legs.

On the chosen day I hoisted my 12-pound turkey onto the counter, took a very deep breath, and summoned the indomitable spirit of that pioneering Oyster Woman. Yes, there was pink liquid and that eerie neck, but disposable gloves and a few squares of paper towel helped a lot. I butchered it, seasoned it, and waited. The next day I simmered the legs on the stove with a head of garlic and slid the breasts into the oven to cook. I glazed them dutifully as they roasted, watching the sauce drip lazily over the meat before caramelizing. And just like that, almost anticlimactically, I had roasted my first turkey.

Sliced and arranged on a platter, it nearly brought a tear to my eye. Shiny, deeply browned skin against pearly flesh. Dark meat so tender it was falling off the bone. I rallied some colleagues to come coo over my efforts. We ate the turkey standing up, splashing it with Frank's hot wing sauce because I couldn't be bothered to make gravy, and let me tell you, I have never felt more accomplished than in that moment.

It's hard to say if I'll ever really be a certified Turkey Person. But if this big freaky bird taught me anything, it is that the only thing you can do is try. And some fears really can be conquered.

BOURBON-AND-BROWN-SUGAR-GLAZED TURKEY

8–10 SERVINGS

Take care not to reduce the glaze too far when it cooks on the stovetop. It should remain quite saucy so it coats the meat in even, thin layers. Switch to hot paprika if you want a whisper of heat throughout.

DRY BRINE

- 6 Tbsp. Diamond Crystal or 3 Tbsp. plus 2½ tsp. Morton kosher salt
- 2 Tbsp. coarsely ground pepper
- 1 Tbsp. granulated sugar
- 1 Tbsp. paprika
- 1 12–14-lb. turkey, neck and giblets removed

CONFIT LEGS

- 1 head of garlic, halved crosswise
- 2 sprigs rosemary
- Extra-virgin olive oil (for cooking; 5–7 cups)

TURKEY BREAST AND ASSEMBLY

- ½ cup (packed) light brown sugar
- ½ cup bourbon
- 2 Tbsp. soy sauce
- 2 Tbsp. unsalted butter
- 1 tsp. paprika
- Sage sprigs and fresh bay leaves (for serving; optional)

DRY BRINE Mix salt, pepper, granulated sugar, and paprika in a small bowl; set dry brine aside.

Place turkey, breast side up, on a cutting board and pat dry. Hold 1 leg and cut through skin holding it to carcass. Pull leg back until ball joint pops out of its socket; cut through joint to separate leg. Repeat on other side with other leg. Turn turkey over and using kitchen shears, cut out backbone. (Reserve it for making stock if desired.)

Arrange turkey pieces, skin side up, on a wire rack set inside a rimmed baking sheet. Sprinkle reserved dry brine generously over both sides of turkey pieces, patting to adhere. (It is important to have the turkey elevated on a rack so it absorbs the dry brine evenly rather than sitting immersed in it on the baking sheet.) Let sit at room temperature at least 1 hour.

DO AHEAD: Turkey can be brined 1 day ahead. Leave uncovered and chill.

CONFIT LEGS Brush excess dry brine from turkey legs (do not rinse) and place in your smallest heavy pot that will fit legs in a single layer (they can overlap slightly). Add garlic and rosemary; pour in oil to barely cover legs. Bring to a simmer over medium heat. Reduce heat so oil is at a bare simmer, cover, and cook, adjusting heat as needed, until tender (meat will start pulling away from the bones), 2½–3 hours. Let cool in oil until just warm, about 1 hour.

DO AHEAD: Turkey legs can be cooked 2 days ahead. Keep in oil; cover and chill.

TURKEY BREAST AND ASSEMBLY Place a rack in middle of oven; preheat to 425°. Brush excess dry brine from turkey breasts and wings. Remove rack with turkey from baking sheet. Clean baking sheet, then pour in 1 cup water. Return rack with turkey to baking sheet. Roast turkey breasts and wings, rotating baking sheet halfway through, until golden brown all over, 25–30 minutes.

Meanwhile, bring brown sugar, bourbon, soy sauce, butter, and paprika to a simmer in small saucepan over medium heat. Cook, stirring occasionally, until sugar is dissolved and glaze is reduced by about a third, 5–7 minutes.

Reduce oven temperature to 325° and continue to roast turkey breasts and wings, brushing lightly with glaze every 15 minutes (don't use all of it; you want some for the legs), until an instant-read thermometer inserted into thickest part of the breasts registers 150° and skin is deep golden brown and shiny, 50–60 minutes longer. Transfer turkey breasts to a clean cutting board and let rest 30–60 minutes. Reserve rack and baking sheet.

Increase oven temperature to 425°. Pour ½ cup water into reserved baking sheet (no need to clean). Remove legs from oil and arrange on reserved rack; wipe off excess oil from legs. Roast until skin is golden brown, 15–20 minutes. Continue to roast, brushing with glaze every 5 minutes, until well coated and deep golden brown and shiny, 12–15 minutes longer.

Meanwhile, pour oil from confit into a tall container and chill. Once fat is set, skim from surface and place in another airtight container. Reserve separately in refrigerator for another use. (Use the fat to roast potatoes or other vegetables and use the stock to make gravy.)

Transfer legs to a platter (no need to rest first). Slice breasts, separating wings, and arrange both next to legs. Tuck sage and bay leaves around if desired.

TURKEY TAKEAWAYS

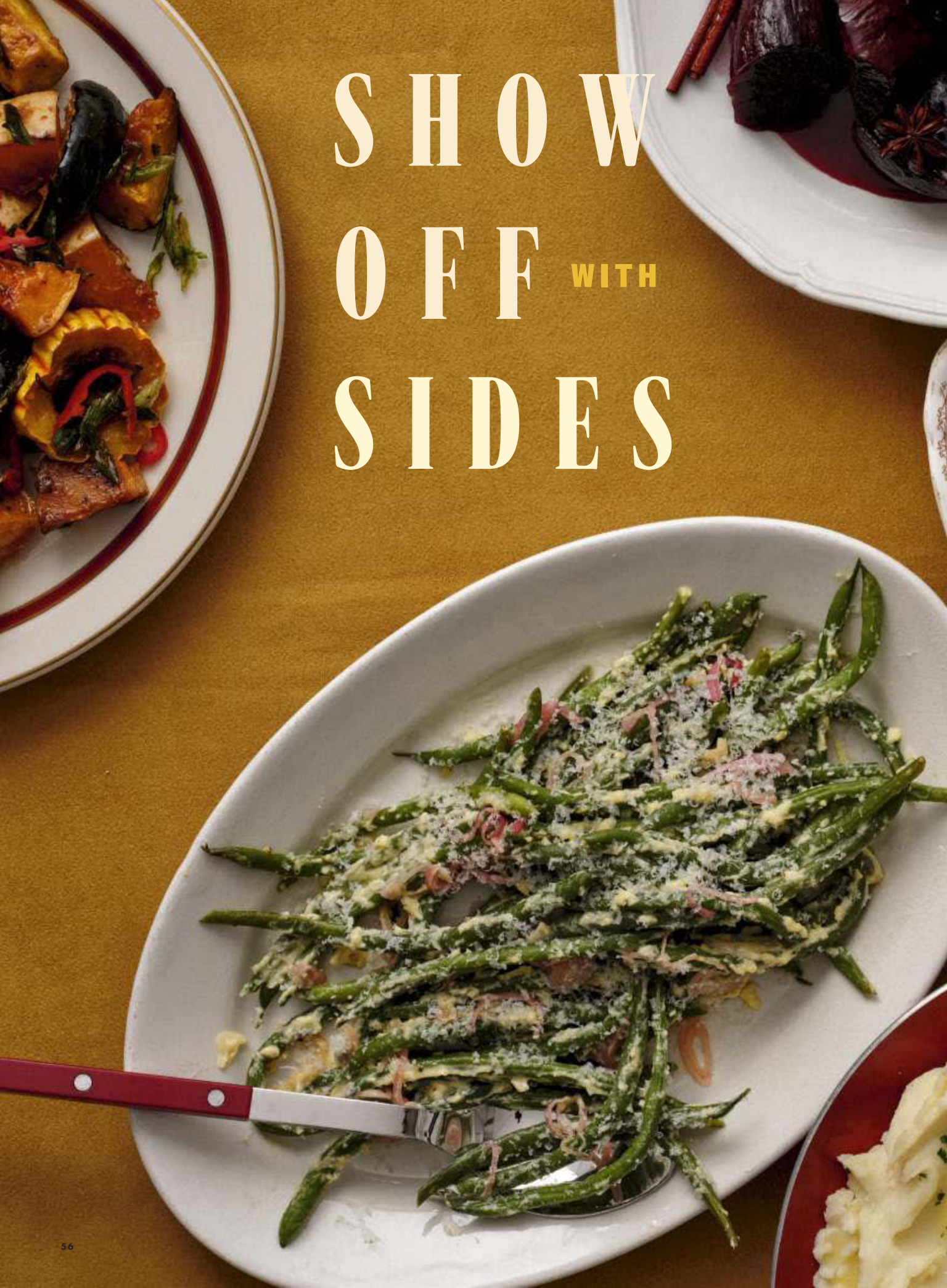
A few key learnings from my first foray into Big Bird Cookery

Smaller Is Better
A 12–14-pound turkey is the sweet spot. It's manageable and feeds more than a dozen people, and you can always cook a second bird if necessary.

Setup Is Key
Having all my tools and ingredients arranged on the counter (and a trash can nearby) before taking the bird out of the fridge helped me feel cool and confident.

Break It Down
Separating the white and dark meat before cooking is always going to be more foolproof than trying to get both to the ideal temperature at the same time.

Don't Stress the Temp
Roast that turkey early and get it out of the way; uncarved, it will stay plenty warm for a surprisingly long time.


SHOW
OFF WITH
SIDES

Something familiar, something unexpected. That's the simple formula for the best kinds of Thanksgiving side dishes, the ones that simultaneously fit right in and have everyone saying, Hey, why didn't I think of that? Whether you're after silky mashed potatoes kicked up with ample garlic flavor or roasted squash that offers a flamboyant pop of spice, these clever riffs take up just the right amount of space on the table.

CANDIED PURPLE SWEET POTATOES

6 SERVINGS

Year after year we dance around ways to tweak our candied yams. Maybe we add marshmallows, or bust out our jars of whole spices, or finally stop calling them yams since they are, in fact, sweet potatoes. (That last one is a nonstarter for anyone of Southern extraction.) This recipe is something everyone can agree on, combining everything you love about the classic—tender, earthy tubers in a sticky, warmly spiced syrup—but uses purple potatoes for a moodier, more vibrant presentation and unique flavor. A generous splash of lemon juice offers a tangy addition to a dish that's always begging for something fresh to round out the abundant sweetness we know and love. *—Inés Anguiano*

- 4 3"-long cinnamon sticks
- 4 whole star anise
- 3 whole cloves
- 3 lb. purple sweet potatoes (about 3 very large or 6 medium), peeled, cut into 1"–2" pieces
- 1½ cups (packed) light brown sugar
- 4 Tbsp. unsalted butter, melted
- 2 Tbsp. bourbon or water
- 2 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- 1 tsp. Diamond Crystal or ½ tsp. Morton kosher salt

Place a rack in middle of oven; preheat to 350°. Scatter cinnamon sticks, star anise, cloves, and sweet potatoes in a 13x9" ceramic or glass baking dish.

Whisk brown sugar, butter, bourbon, lemon juice, and salt in a small bowl until smooth. Pour over sweet potato mixture and toss to coat. Tightly cover baking dish with foil and bake until sweet potatoes are very tender and sauce is thickened to a glossy syrup, 1 hour and 45 minutes to 2 hours. Uncover and let cool slightly before serving.

COOK'S NOTE

Despite their similar color, purple sweet potatoes and ubes—the striking star of many Filipino desserts—are not the same thing. They're both in the tuber family (so cousins), but ubes are technically yams, with a tough bark-like skin. Purple sweet potatoes, on the other hand, are starchier and more floral, with an edible skin. If you're lucky enough to come across ubes, which have a lovely deeply nutty flavor, feel free to peel and swap them here.

GARLICKIEST MASHED POTATOES

6 SERVINGS

Adding garlic to the Thanksgiving mashed potatoes is an exercise in balance. Too much of the allium and the flavor lingers on your tongue, overshadowing the other sides. But when you get it right, it's pure harmony, like Beyoncé, Kelly, and Michelle at a Destiny's Child reunion. You might be tempted by a more straightforward mash, but with the right technique, you can have it all: potatoes with plenty of character yet enough mellowness to allow everything else on the table to shine. Slow-roasting the garlic is the answer. The technique tames any harshness while intensifying the sweet and savory notes. This way you can cram a wealth of garlic flavor into the mash (three whole heads, to be exact) without any of that lingering zing that could otherwise compromise the meal. —*Jesse Szewczyk*

- 3 large heads of garlic, ¼" cut off tops to expose cloves
- Extra-virgin olive oil (for drizzling)
- 2 tsp. Diamond Crystal or 1¼ tsp. Morton kosher salt, plus more
- 4 lb. russet potatoes (about 4 large), peeled, cut into 2" pieces
- 13 Tbsp. unsalted butter, divided
- 1½ cups heavy cream
- Freshly ground pepper
- Finely chopped parsley (for serving)

Place a rack in middle of oven; preheat to 350°. Place garlic, cut side up, in center of a large sheet of foil on a rimmed baking sheet; drizzle with oil and sprinkle with a pinch of salt. Scrunch up foil around garlic to encase. Bake until garlic is lightly browned and very tender, 75–85 minutes. Let cool.

Meanwhile, place potatoes in a large pot; pour in cold water to cover by 2". Set over high heat and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium and simmer until potatoes are tender (a knife should slide easily into flesh), 20–30 minutes. Drain and set aside in colander. Reserve pot.

Melt 10 Tbsp. butter in reserved pot over low heat. Using a potato ricer or food mill, rice potatoes into pot; stir to coat. (Or, add to pot and mash with a potato masher.) Gradually pour in cream, stirring constantly to combine; stir in 2 tsp. Diamond Crystal or 1¼ tsp. Morton kosher salt. Season with pepper and more salt if needed. Squeeze garlic cloves from heads into potatoes; stir to combine. Transfer to a large bowl.

Just before serving, melt remaining 3 Tbsp. butter in a small saucepan over medium heat and drizzle over mashed potatoes; scatter parsley on top.

DO AHEAD: Garlic can be roasted 1 day ahead. Keep wrapped in foil packet and chill.

COOK'S NOTE

Properly roasting a head of garlic takes time—a precious commodity during the busy holiday season. For those looking to get ahead, roast your bulbs the day before and store the foil packet in the fridge overnight. That way, when the big meal approaches, all you have to do is squeeze the jammy cloves out of their skins and into your mashed potatoes.

GREEN BEANS WITH PARMESAN VINAIGRETTE

6 SERVINGS

This year we're forgoing the bubbling green bean casserole in favor of a punchy side that provides some cooling contrast to a buffet of hot and room-temp dishes. Instead of cream of mushroom soup and French's fried onions, these beans are tossed with quick-pickled shallots and blanketed in a bright blender dressing thickened with salty-rich parm. On Thanksgiving, we consider these a cook's best friend: They're best straight from the fridge and better when made ahead, leaving you more time for just about anything else. —*Kendra Vaculin*

- ¼ cup plus 1 Tbsp. apple cider vinegar
- 1 Tbsp. honey
- Kosher salt
- 1 large shallot, thinly sliced
- 1 lb. green beans, trimmed
- 2 oz. Parmesan, cut into small pieces, plus more finely grated for serving
- 1 garlic clove, finely grated
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 Tbsp. Dijon mustard
- Freshly ground pepper

Whisk together vinegar, honey, and a pinch of salt in a small bowl. Add shallot and let sit, stirring occasionally, at least 15 minutes and up to 30 minutes to pickle. Drain shallot, reserving pickling liquid.

Meanwhile, cook green beans in a large pot of boiling generously salted water just until tender, about 4 minutes. Using a slotted spoon or tongs, transfer green beans to a large bowl of ice water and let cool. Leave water boiling.

Blend 2 oz. Parmesan pieces in a blender on high until very finely crumbled. Add 3 Tbsp. boiling water and blend, scraping down sides as needed (it may stay unevenly incorporated). Add garlic, oil, mustard, and reserved pickling liquid; season with pepper. Blend on high until smooth; season dressing with salt.

Drain green beans and pat dry with a kitchen towel. Place in a clean large bowl, drizzle dressing over, and add pickled shallot. Toss to combine. Chill, tossing occasionally, at least 1 hour and up to 5 hours (dressing will thicken as it chills).

When ready to serve, toss green beans to loosen dressing, then transfer to a platter with tongs, leaving any remaining dressing in bowl. Top green beans generously with grated Parmesan and season with pepper.

COOK'S NOTE

While you could sub fancy little haricot verts in for standard-issue green beans in this recipe, we actually prefer the latter. Once blanched, the thicker beans soak up the flavor of the dressing better and stand up well to a finishing flurry of grated cheese and black pepper.

GOLDEN SWEET POTATO ROLLS

MAKES ABOUT 20

A heaping wallop of sweet potato purée lends a soft orange glow and beguiling sweetness to these tender dinner rolls. The natural starches and sugars in the tubers function similar to a tangzhong, the cooked flour paste that's the secret to milk bread's springy bounce. Make a double batch; you'll be grateful when it comes time to make sandwiches from the leftovers the next day. —*Shilpa Uskokovic*

- 1 large sweet potato (about 8 oz.), scrubbed
- ½ cup (packed; 100 g) light brown sugar
- ¼ cup whole milk
- 1 ¼-oz. envelope instant yeast (about 2¼ tsp.)
- 3 large eggs
- ½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, melted, plus more for pan and serving
- 1 Tbsp. plus 1 tsp. Diamond Crystal or 2¼ tsp. Morton kosher salt, plus more
- 3 cups (375 g) bread flour
- Vegetable oil (for bowl)
- Flaky sea salt (optional)

Cut 2–3 shallow slits along length of sweet potato. Place in a medium microwave-safe bowl; add ½ cup water. Cover tightly with plastic wrap and microwave until sweet potato is tender, about 15 minutes; drain. (Or, steam sweet potato in a steamer basket set over a pot of simmering water until tender, 20–22 minutes.) Let sit until cool enough to handle. Peel; smash flesh to a coarse purée.

Transfer 1 cup (packed; 235 g) purée to the bowl of a stand mixer. Add brown sugar, milk, yeast, 2 eggs, ½ cup butter, and 1 Tbsp. plus 1 tsp. Diamond Crystal or 2¼ tsp. Morton kosher salt; mix with a fork to combine. Add flour, fit mixer with dough hook, and beat on medium-low speed until a soft, smooth dough forms (it may stick to bottom of bowl but should mostly come away from sides), 12–15 minutes.

Turn dough out onto a surface (unfloured) and shape into a ball. Lightly coat mixer bowl with oil. Return dough to bowl, cover tightly with a plate or plastic wrap, and let sit in a warm, draft-free spot until nearly doubled in size, about 2 hours. (For optimal flavor, let dough rise at room temperature 30 minutes, then chill 12 hours to proof slowly.)

Transfer dough to a clean surface (no need to bring to room temperature if chilled; cold dough is easier to work with). Using a bench scraper or paring knife, cut dough into 20 portions (about 43 g each). Working one at a time, cup your hand over dough and drag across surface, moving your hand in a rapid circular motion, to form dough into a tight ball (rolling into balls on an unfloured, ungreased surface creates friction and helps the shaping process). Brush a 13x9" baking pan with butter and arrange rolls in pan. Cover with plastic wrap; let sit in a warm, draft-free spot until nearly doubled in size and puffy, about 2 hours.

Place a rack in middle of oven; preheat to 350°. Whisk remaining 1 egg and a large pinch of kosher salt in a small bowl to blend. Gently brush tops of rolls with egg. Bake until deep golden brown on top and an instant-read thermometer inserted into the center of a roll registers 190°, 30–35 minutes.

Generously brush hot rolls with melted butter; sprinkle lightly with sea salt if desired. Let cool at least 15 minutes before serving.

DO AHEAD: Sweet potato can be puréed 3 days ahead; transfer to an airtight container. Cover and chill. Rolls (without butter and sea salt) can be baked 1 day ahead; store airtight at room temperature. Reheat, loosely covered in foil, in a 325° oven until warmed through, about 10 minutes. Alternatively, freeze rolls up to 1 month ahead. Let cool; wrap pan tightly in plastic, then foil. Thaw, wrapped, in fridge 12 hours. Remove foil and plastic wrap, re-cover loosely with foil, and reheat in a 325° oven until warmed through, about 15 minutes. Generously brush rolls with butter and sprinkle lightly with sea salt if desired.

COOK'S NOTE

Microwaving the sweet potato into submission is the fastest way to cook it, though steaming is a good second choice. Just don't boil it in a pot of water like pasta; the sweet potato may become waterlogged and throw off the ratio of flour to moisture, resulting in a wet dough that's harder to work with.

SWEET-AND-SPICY SQUASH WITH SCALLION OIL

6–8 SERVINGS

Roasted squash feels like a quintessentially autumnal side and, in keeping with the mood of the season, can feel a bit sleepy. But with fresh ginger and chile, this platter of glossy miso-glazed mixed squash is bright and alive, a riot of textures and flavors. The frizzled-scallion topping—a nod to Cantonese steamed fish, which often arrives at the table covered with great tufts of the stuff—suffuses the whole dish with a complex oniony perfume. Even on a table full of the holiday's greatest hits, this is a certified crowd-pleaser. —*Shilpa Uskokovic*

- ½ medium butternut squash (1½–2 lb.), peeled, seeds removed, cut crosswise 2" thick
- 1 medium acorn squash (about 1½ lb.), scrubbed, halved, seeds removed, cut into 2"-thick wedges
- 1 small delicata squash (about 1 lb.), scrubbed, cut into 2"-thick rings
- ½ cup extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- Kosher salt
- 1 1" piece ginger, peeled, finely grated
- ½ cup apple cider vinegar
- ½ cup pure maple syrup
- ¼ cup low-sodium soy sauce
- 2 Tbsp. sambal oelek
- 2 Tbsp. white miso
- 2 bunches scallions (about 16), thinly sliced on a diagonal
- 1 large Fresno chile, thinly sliced (optional)

Place a rack in bottom third of oven; preheat to 425°. Place squash on a large rimmed baking sheet; drizzle ¼ cup oil over and sprinkle with a generous pinch of salt. Toss to coat; arrange in a single layer. Roast squash, undisturbed, until almost completely tender (about three quarters cooked) and deep golden brown underneath, 25–35 minutes.

Meanwhile, bring ginger, vinegar, maple syrup, soy sauce, sambal oelek, and miso to a boil in a medium nonstick skillet over medium heat and cook, whisking often, until glaze is thick and syrupy, 7–9 minutes.

Remove squash from oven and pour glaze over; shake baking sheet gently to distribute glaze as evenly as possible (it doesn't have to be perfect). Return to oven and roast until squash are completely tender and glaze is sticky, 12–18 minutes. Gently toss squash to coat well in glaze; transfer to a platter.

Meanwhile, cook scallions and remaining ¼ cup oil in a medium nonstick skillet over medium heat, stirring often, until scallions are deeply browned in spots and crisp, 8–12 minutes.

Spoon scallions over squash, leaving most of the oil behind (save for another use, like frying eggs or spooning over rice). Scatter chile on top if desired.

COOK'S NOTE

Slicing the scallions into long, thin wisps creates the most delicate garnish, so take your time. Carefully cut one scallion at a time; do this a day ahead when you're less likely to be rushed. Store the sliced scallions in the fridge in an airtight container with a barely damp paper towel on top. For the crispiest texture, frizzle the scallions as close to serving as possible.

MAPLE BACON CABBAGE WEDGES

6 SERVINGS

Instead of spending precious time prepping piles of individual brussels sprouts, roast one glorious head of cabbage instead. That single, easy-to-manage cabbage provides a myriad of textures and flavors: Ruffled edges get crisp and caramelized, while those tender center leaves become lusciously soft. Glazed in a glossy sauce reminiscent of honey mustard and topped with bits of bacon, it's a vegetable side that hits all the notes—sweet, salty, bright—and it's going to be the first thing on everyone's plate of seconds. —*June Kim*

- **1 very large or 2 small savoy cabbages (2–2½ lb. total), halved, cut into 4–6 wedges depending on size**
- **2 Tbsp. (or more) extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for drizzling**
- **1 tsp. Diamond Crystal or ½ tsp. Morton kosher salt, plus more**
- **Freshly ground pepper**
- **4 slices thick-cut bacon (about 6 oz.), cut into ¼"-thick pieces**
- **1 medium shallot, finely chopped**
- **4 sprigs thyme**
- **4 Tbsp. unsalted butter**
- **¼ cup red wine vinegar**
- **3 Tbsp. pure maple syrup**
- **2 Tbsp. Dijon mustard**

Place a rack in middle of oven; preheat to 425°. Drizzle cabbage all over with oil; season generously with salt and pepper. Set aside.

Heat a dry cast-iron skillet over medium. Cook bacon, stirring often, until browned and crisp, 8–10 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer to paper towels to drain.

Pour 2 Tbsp. oil into drippings in same skillet. Working in batches and adding more oil between batches if needed, carefully arrange cabbage wedges, cut sides down, in pan and cook over medium, turning to other cut sides halfway through, until cut sides are golden brown, 12–16 minutes per batch. Transfer to a parchment-lined rimmed baking sheet, arranging on a cut side down. Reserve skillet.

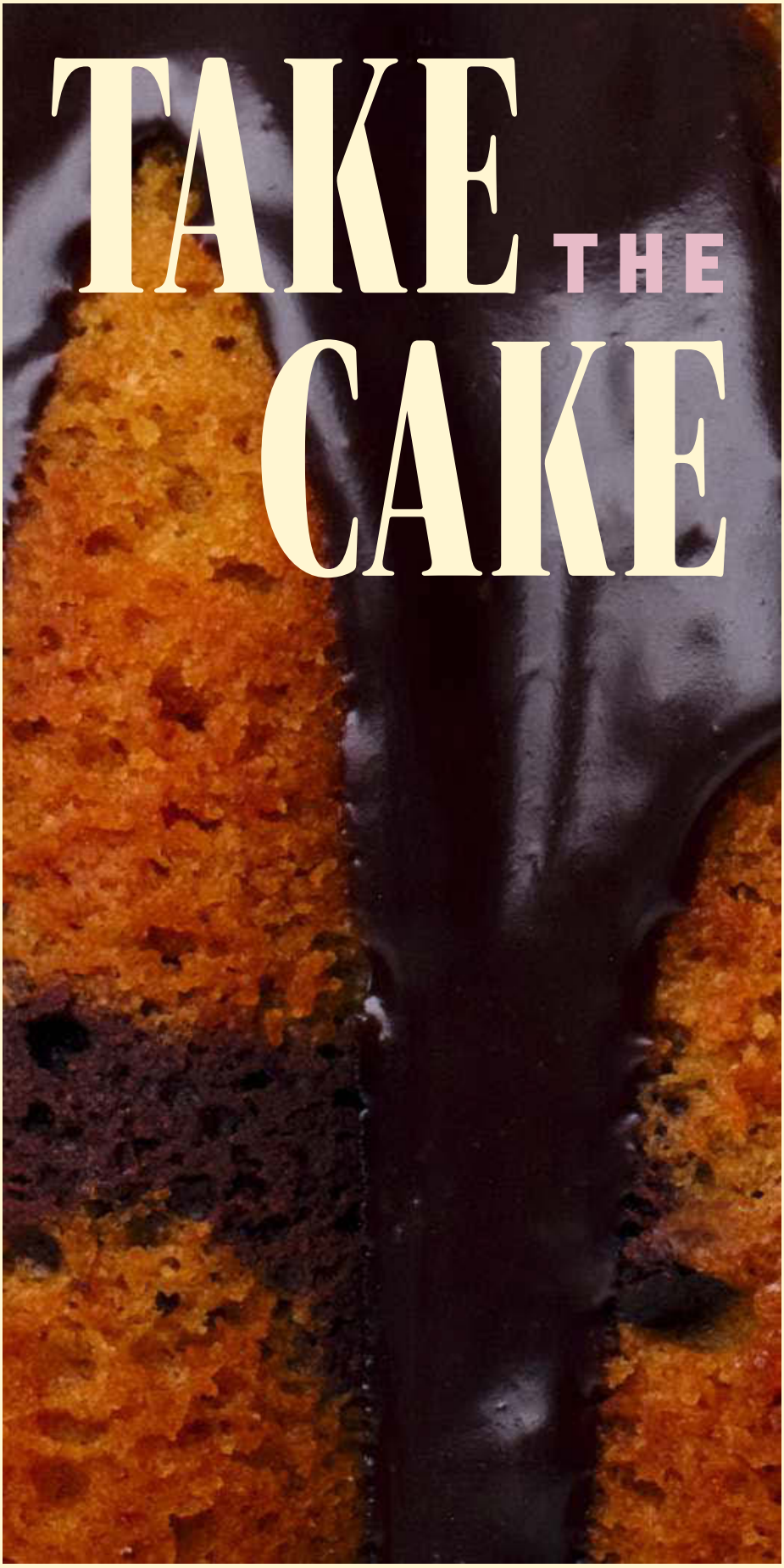
Transfer cabbages to oven and bake, turning halfway through, until deeply charred on all sides and tender, 30–40 minutes.

Meanwhile, cook shallot, thyme, and butter in reserved skillet over medium, stirring occasionally, until shallot is softened, about 4 minutes. Add vinegar, maple syrup, mustard, and 1 tsp. Diamond Crystal or ½ tsp. Morton kosher salt. Cook, stirring often, until sauce is reduced to a glaze-like consistency, about 3 minutes. Taste and season with pepper and more salt if needed. Using tongs, drag wedges through sauce to coat and arrange on a platter. Pour any sauce remaining in pan over and top with bacon.

COOK'S NOTE

This recipe calls for savoy cabbage rather than your typical green variety for a few reasons: Savoy tends to give off less water in the cooking process, resulting in perfectly caramelized, seared wedges. It also has a sweeter and more mild flavor compared to standard green cabbage, and the loose, crinkled leaves are beautifully dramatic when served. But if you can't get your hands on it, don't fret; a standard green cabbage will work just fine.

TAKE THE CAKE



Want your contribution to the dessert buffet to turn heads this year? Make a cake. It's what every dessert plate is missing among the beloved pies and tarts. Whether it's a show-stealing layer cake festooned with candied cranberries or a no-mixer-required Bundt with a swirly two-tone crumb, when it comes to Thanksgiving, the golden rule of gathering always applies: *The more the merrier!*

Bourbon Caramel Pecan Cake

All the pleasures of pecan pie filling—deeply toasted nuts, rich, treacly caramel—reimagined as a topping for a tender vanilla cake.

White Chocolate–Cranberry Cake

Let someone else fuss over the turkey: This cranberry-laced layer cake is the kind of Thanksgiving project where the result is every bit as grandiose as the effort.

Chocolate-Pumpkin Marble Cake

No mixer? No problem. This gorgeously marbled, ganache-drizzled Bundt looks fancy but can be made entirely by hand.

White Chocolate–Cranberry Cake

10–12 SERVINGS

With a claret red cranberry jam so good you'll want it on toast and an unusually delicious white chocolate frosting, this is a cake that is equal parts impressive and achievable. It boasts a gentle tang from buttermilk and a suggestion of orange, along with sugared cranberries that taste like top-of-the-line sour candy. Ensure your cream cheese and butter are very soft, and use a good white chocolate for the smoothest, silkiest frosting. Bars of eating-quality chocolate contain more cacao butter than chips or chunks and melt more smoothly; we like Tony's Chocolonely.

JAM AND SUGARED CRANBERRIES

- 1 large orange
- 8 oz. fresh or frozen cranberries
- ¾ cup plus ⅓ cup (217 g) sugar
- 1 Tbsp. unsalted butter
- 2 tsp. vanilla bean paste or vanilla extract
- ½ tsp. Diamond Crystal or ¼ tsp. Morton kosher salt

CAKES

- Nonstick vegetable oil spray or unsalted butter, room temperature (for pan)
- 2 cups plus 3 Tbsp. (250 g) bleached cake flour
- 1½ cups (300 g) sugar
- 2 tsp. Diamond Crystal or 1¼ tsp. Morton kosher salt
- 1½ tsp. baking powder
- ½ tsp. baking soda
- ½ cup vegetable oil
- 6 Tbsp. (¾ stick) unsalted butter, room temperature
- 1 cup buttermilk
- 2 tsp. vanilla bean paste or vanilla extract
- 3 large eggs

FROSTING AND ASSEMBLY

- 12 oz. white chocolate, coarsely chopped
- 8 oz. cream cheese, room temperature
- 10 Tbsp. unsalted butter, room temperature
- Kosher salt
- 1 large orange (optional)

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: A pastry bag and a ¼"-diameter or other medium round tip

JAM AND SUGARED CRANBERRIES Finely grate zest from orange into a small bowl; cover and set aside. Halve orange and squeeze juice into a measuring glass (you should have about ¼ cup); set aside.

Cook cranberries, ¾ cup (150 g) sugar, and ¼ cup water in a medium saucepan over medium-high heat, stirring often, until sugar is dissolved and cranberries are coated in syrup but still intact, 5–7 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer about ¼ cup cranberries to a wire rack; let sit until dried slightly and tacky, about 10 minutes.

Place remaining ⅓ cup (67 g) sugar in a small bowl. Add cranberries and toss to coat evenly; set aside in sugar.

Add butter, vanilla, salt, and reserved orange juice to remaining cranberries in pan. Cook, stirring often, until cranberries burst, juices are syrupy, and pan is visible when a spoon is dragged across the bottom, 12–15 minutes. Let cool, then transfer to a large measuring glass and blend with an immersion blender to make a coarse jam. (Or, use a regular blender.)

DO AHEAD: Sugared cranberries and jam can be made 6 hours ahead. Store separately, covered, at room temperature.

CAKES Place a rack in middle of oven; preheat to 325°. Lightly coat two 8"-diameter cake pans with nonstick spray; line bottoms with parchment paper rounds. Mix cake flour, sugar, salt, baking powder, and baking soda in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment on low speed to combine, about 1 minute.

Add oil and butter, increase speed to medium-low, and beat until a thick paste forms (it should resemble wet sand), about 1 minute. Add buttermilk, vanilla, and reserved orange zest; beat until pale and fluffy, about 2 minutes (this mixing time will help keep the cake from sinking later; don't worry about overmixing).

Add eggs one at a time, beating 30 seconds after each addition; batter should be smooth and creamy. Divide between prepared pans; smooth surface.

Bake cakes until a wooden tester inserted into the centers comes out with only a few moist crumbs attached, 30–35 minutes. Transfer pans to a wire rack; let cakes cool in pans 15 minutes. Run an offset spatula or small knife around sides of cakes to loosen; turn out onto rack (leave parchment). Let cakes cool completely.

DO AHEAD: Cakes can be baked 1 day ahead. Store tightly wrapped at room temperature.

FROSTING AND ASSEMBLY Heat white chocolate in a heatproof bowl set over a saucepan of barely simmering water (bowl should not touch water), stirring, until melted and smooth. Remove bowl from heat and let white chocolate cool until barely lukewarm but still fluid.

Beat cream cheese, butter, and a large pinch of salt in the clean bowl of stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment on medium speed until light and creamy, 8–10 minutes. Reduce speed to low and, working in 2–3 batches, add white chocolate, beating to combine after each addition. (If chocolate is too warm, frosting may be soupy. Chill until it's cold around the edges, then beat until smooth.)

Remove parchment paper from cakes; discard. Place a cake, right side up, on a cake stand or large plate (a cake turntable works great). Transfer 1 cup frosting to pastry bag fitted with tip. Pipe a border of frosting along top edges of cake. Spread 1 cup cranberry jam over surface within frosting border. Place second cake, upside down, on top. Spread top and sides of cake with remaining frosting in bowl. Pipe a ring of frosting around top edges of cake and fill in surface with remaining jam. Chill cake until frosting is firm, 30–40 minutes.

Just before serving, arrange reserved sugared cranberries on top of jam. If using, remove wide pieces of zest from orange with a vegetable peeler, leaving white pith behind. Cut zest into thin strips and arrange around piped edges of cake.

DO AHEAD: Cake (without sugared cranberries and orange zest) can be assembled 8 hours ahead. Cover loosely and chill. Let sit at room temperature at least 1 hour before serving.

Bourbon Caramel Pecan Cake

8 SERVINGS

Capturing the essence of a gooey slice of pecan pie, this tender cake is a much more forgiving format. The nuts get pressed into the surface of the batter before baking, then the finished cake is generously brushed on top with a sticky bourbon caramel that drips down the sides like caramel gold.

CAKE

- Nonstick vegetable oil spray or unsalted butter, room temperature (for pan)
- 8 oz. raw pecan halves (about 2 cups)
- 2¼ cups (281 g) all-purpose flour
- 1½ cups (300 g) granulated sugar
- 2½ tsp. Diamond Crystal or 1½ tsp. Morton kosher salt
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. ground cinnamon
- ½ tsp. freshly grated nutmeg
- ¾ cup (1½ sticks) unsalted butter
- ¾ cup whole milk
- 1 tsp. vanilla bean paste or vanilla extract
- 3 large eggs

GLAZE AND ASSEMBLY

- 1 cup (packed; 200 g) dark brown sugar
- ¾ cup (1½ sticks) unsalted butter, cut into 1" pieces
- ½ cup heavy cream
- ¼ cup bourbon or water
- ½ tsp. Diamond Crystal or ¼ tsp. Morton kosher salt

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: A 9"-diameter springform pan

CAKE Place a rack in middle of oven; preheat to 325°. Lightly coat pan with nonstick spray. Line bottom with a parchment paper round; lightly coat with nonstick spray. Toast pecans on a small rimmed baking sheet, tossing halfway through, until slightly darkened in color and fragrant, 10–12 minutes. Let cool.

Beat flour, granulated sugar, salt, baking powder, cinnamon, and nutmeg in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment on medium speed to combine, about 1 minute. Add butter; beat until mixture is sandy with no visible butter pieces remaining, about 45 seconds. Add milk and vanilla and beat until smooth and fluffy, about 2 minutes (this mixing time will help keep the cake from sinking later; don't worry about overmixing). Add eggs one at a time, beating 30 seconds after each addition; batter should be smooth and creamy. Scrape into prepared pan and arrange pecans in a single layer on top, pressing in gently to adhere.

Bake cake until a wooden tester inserted into the center comes out with only a few moist crumbs attached, 45–50 minutes. Transfer pan to a wire rack and let cake cool in pan.

GLAZE AND ASSEMBLY While the cake is cooling, cook brown sugar, butter, cream, bourbon, and salt in a medium saucepan, whisking often, until thick enough to coat a spoon, 8–10 minutes. Let glaze cool.

Brush half of glaze over cake in pan. Let sit 15 minutes. Unmold cake; transfer to a cake stand or large plate. Serve with remaining glaze for drizzling over.

DO AHEAD: Cake can be made 2 days ahead. Cover cake and remaining glaze separately and chill. Let both sit at room temperature 1 hour before serving.

Chocolate-Pumpkin Marble Cake

12–16 SERVINGS

A big bowl of pumpkin batter is split in two, one half flavored with a heavy shower of cocoa powder, the rest left bright orange and spiked with a bit of cinnamon. The end result is a beautiful, lofty cake with so much flavor you will completely forget about that apple pie.

CAKE

- Nonstick vegetable oil spray or unsalted butter, room temperature (for pan)
- 2 cups (250 g) all-purpose flour
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- 3 large eggs
- 1 15-oz. can pumpkin purée
- 2¼ cups (450 g) sugar
- 1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, melted, slightly cooled
- 2½ tsp. Diamond Crystal or 1½ tsp. Morton kosher salt
- ½ cup (42 g) Dutch-process cocoa powder
- 1 Tbsp. vanilla bean paste or vanilla extract
- ½ tsp. ground cinnamon or pumpkin pie spice

GANACHE AND ASSEMBLY

- ½ cup heavy cream
- 4 oz. semisweet chocolate, chopped, or semisweet chocolate chips (about ¾ cup)
- ¼ tsp. Diamond Crystal or Morton kosher salt

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: A 10–12-cup Bundt pan

CAKE Place a rack in middle of oven; preheat to 325°. Generously coat pan with nonstick spray, making sure to get every crevice. Whisk flour and baking powder in a medium bowl to combine. Whisk eggs, pumpkin purée, sugar, butter, and salt in a large bowl until smooth. Add dry ingredients and whisk until incorporated (batter will be lumpy). Spoon 3 cups (720 g) batter into medium bowl that held dry ingredients. Place a fine-mesh sieve over bowl and sift cocoa powder into batter. Add vanilla and mix with a rubber spatula until smooth. Add cinnamon to pumpkin batter in large bowl; mix in with a clean spatula.

Scrape half of plain pumpkin batter (eyeballing is fine) into prepared pan, then scrape half of chocolate batter over. Repeat layers with remaining plain pumpkin and chocolate batters. Smooth surface. (Do not run a knife through to marble.)

Bake cake until a wooden tester inserted into the center comes out with just a few moist crumbs attached, 55–65 minutes. Transfer pan to a wire rack and let cake cool in pan 20 minutes. Turn cake out onto rack; let cool completely.

GANACHE AND ASSEMBLY While the cake is cooling, bring cream to a boil in a small saucepan over medium heat. Remove from heat, add chocolate and salt, and whisk until ganache is smooth and glossy. Scrape into a small bowl; let cool.

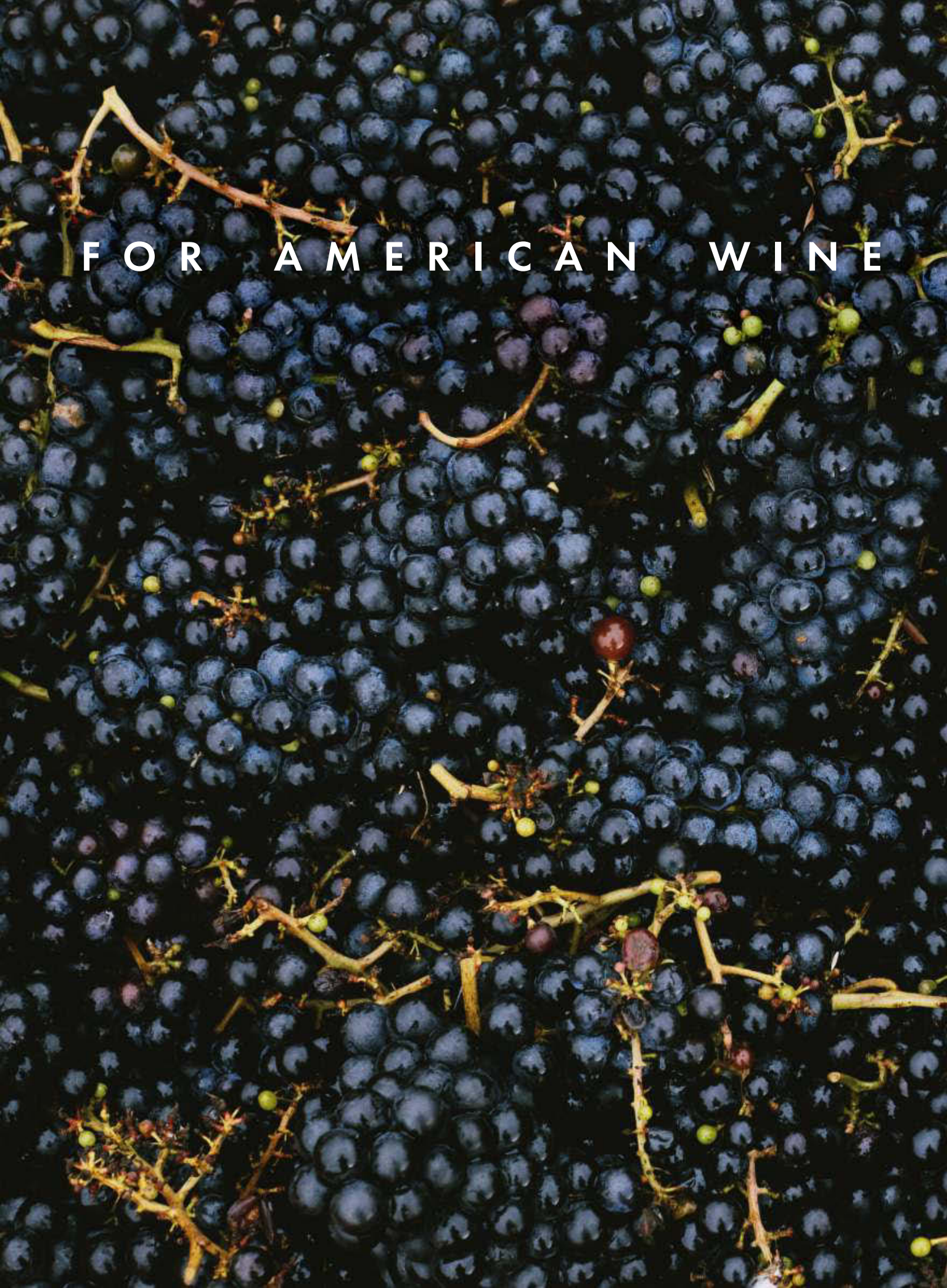
Pour ganache over cake, letting it drip down sides. Chill until ganache is set, 20–30 minutes. Transfer cake to a cake stand or large plate to serve.

DO AHEAD: Cake can be made 1 day ahead. Cover loosely and chill. Bring to room temperature before serving if desired.

IT'S A FINE TIME

A COLLECTIVE OF WINE PROS IS ENERGIZING THE INDUSTRY WITH NEW PERSPECTIVES ON SUSTAINABILITY AND AN EMBRACE OF NATIVE GRAPES

BY OSAYI ENDOLYN
PHOTOGRAPHS BY TRAVIS RAINEY


FOR AMERICAN WINE

Most wine produced in the world is derived from a shared grape species, *Vitis vinifera*. Consisting of thousands of varieties, *vinifera* spans broad geographical regions from western Europe to southwest Asia, from the Middle East across to North Africa. When you enjoy wines like Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon, Riesling, or Merlot, you're enjoying *vinifera*. But wine is a mutable force. It's always changing to reflect its present circumstances, and the story of *vinifera* is evolving.

While the planet adapts to the increasing pace and impact of climate change, winegrowers and winemakers all over have seen drastic shifts in *vinifera,* especially in places where it isn't indigenous, like in the United States. Constant disease pressure and extreme weather can affect grape health, resulting in expensive losses. Compromised grapes do not become wine that anyone wants to drink. Winegrowers—farmers—must deal in practicalities. With roaming vineyards addled by invasive insects, pools of heavy rainwater in seasons that used to be bone-dry, and contagions that spread from vine to vine, they've asked the fraught question of whether wine as we know it will exist in the future at all. If so, under what rules of engagement?

Leaders in the industry are working to ensure that future thanks to a cross section of professionals. Their contributions range among production, curation, resource-sharing, and innovation, resulting in wines as bold as they are delicious. The wines from this trajectory highlight labrusca, a different *Vitis* species that has invigorated drinkers, particularly in North America.

For evidence of a groundswell shift in American winemaking, you can look at a number of excellent producers in the country, but the East Coast has a spark, from Maine to North Carolina. The most exciting wineries are defining what it means to make regional, terroir-driven American wines. Jahdé Marley took note of this sea change. A New York portfolio manager in wine and spirits sales, she and close colleagues, a cohort of renowned sommeliers, sales reps, and producers, took a road trip to explore wineries like NOK Vino in New Hampshire, Camuna Cellars in Pennsylvania, and R.A.S. Wines in Maine—all producing wine in this manner. They found the wines to be "lively, lighthearted with playfulness. Some are lower in alcohol, higher acid. They even look electric and fun," Marley says of the striking range of bluish reds, deep rose hues, blush pinks, and golden yellows.

These wines vary by personal preference, location, and ethos. Some growers work with limited *vinifera* but increasingly use native grapes like Catawba and Concord (yes, the grape of your childhood juice box memories); local fruits like black currant, berries, or apples; and hybrid grapes, meaning fruit crossbred from more than one species, like Chambourcin, Marquette, or Chardonel. Hybrids result in heartier grapes that withstand environmental challenges, and richer, complex flavors that balance the end product.

Marley and her colleagues weren't just impressed with how these wines tasted. The growers' farming practices were foundational. Marley had seen other winemakers in the region force *vinifera* varieties to grow, but "every couple vintages, they're ripping up the vineyard to replant the same grapes with different viticultural methods." It's a pricey approach that stresses the land and doesn't yield great wine. She noted that growers who prioritized what worked best in the vineyard, rather than being preoccupied with legacy grapes from Europe, were farming hybrid and endemic fruits that thrived. Marley and her peers agreed, more people needed to know what was happening along the East Coast. Producers could share wise farming methods, sales reps could amplify the message through distribution, and consumers craved intentional approaches to wine.

In 2022, Marley launched Anything But Vinifera Ferments, or ABV Ferments, a traveling summit that's part tasting experience and part educational platform. Alongside dozens of producers, beverage directors, buyers, and supporters, ABV became a destination and community. It's now an established ecosystem. The Brooklyn-based organization has now hosted tastings and panels in Miami; Asheville, North Carolina; Waynesboro, Virginia; Oakland; and Los Angeles. Centering a decolonized ethos and celebration of all cultures that ferment fruit, ABV attracted industry newcomers, and it connected deeply with longtime veterans.

Ben Jordan, a celebrated Virginia-born winemaker, has been instrumental in shaping what regional wine can be in the Shenandoah Valley, situated along the Blue Ridge Mountains in the western part of the state. He is cofounder and partner in Commonwealth Crush Co. (CWC), Midland, and Lightwell Survey wineries, known for their decisively creative takes. "ABV is important to me personally," he says. "It gave me renewed perspective and energy…to engage with people who are open to different expressions and flavors. That's truly inspirational."

Jordan knows about lighting folks up. In 2018, while he was winemaker at Early Mountain Vineyards, his interpretation of Petit Manseng caught the attention of Lee Campbell, now wine director at the restaurant Borgo in New York City. Petit Manseng is a *vinifera* grape from Jurançon in southwest France that does well in Virginia due to similar climates. "The lusciousness of Petit Manseng that Ben was making back then, it was their own version of the variety," Campbell says. The grape is known for a dry style that carries honey and pineapple notes. "The Virginia version tends to be more tropical and higher in alcohol, more rich, robust. I loved what he was doing." After connecting directly with Jordan, Campbell became a partner in launching CWC, along with Jordan's brother Tim, a winegrower, and former Early Mountain staffer Patt Eagan. For Campbell, Jordan's style sparked an awareness of the possibilities of Virginia wine, and American wine in general. "In many ways the domestic wine trade has been a facsimile of what's going on in Europe," Campbell says. "In the United States we're always trying to deny what we are."

That narrative of cultural evasion is prevalent in the American South, which is often uncredited for its contributions. We haven't been drinking Southern wine for generations for the same reason the

In 2022, Jahdé Marley founded ABV Ferments, a wine summit that's part tasting experience, part educational platform that's reimagining the future of the American wine industry.

"PEOPLE ARE DRINKING BASED ON DELICIOUSNESS, NOT ELITISM."

—Lee Campbell

Lee Campbell, wine director of Borgo in New York City, in the restaurant's wine cellar.

Ben Jordan, cofounder of Commonwealth Crush and Midland Wines, collects Chardonel grapes in the vineyard of his sixth-generation family farm, Mount Airy, which is run by his brother Tim.

South's role in cuisine isn't more visible. Classic American foodways are rooted in the Commonwealth: barbecue, mac and cheese, Brunswick stew, even whiskey. Freetown native chef Edna Lewis wrote books about the seasonal rhythms of country cooking decades before Alice Waters became famous for California fare. Wine, too, has a complex history in Virginia.

Wine culture in the area is traced to native grapes like Muscadine and 17th-century colonial imports. Thomas Jefferson's failed attempts at cultivating European vines on the Monticello plantation only amplified his insatiable taste for importing French bottles. His estate dining room was among the finer places for white visitors to sip and be served, an experience curated by Jefferson's enslaved butler Burwell Colbert, believed to be the first American sommelier. Campbell says of being in Virginia, "I saw highway markers that indicated Black people's relationship to this land and history. I saw that this was an American story that I could be involved in telling." She's far from alone.

In Charlottesville, winemaker Reggie Leonard took note of the synergy ABV Ferments was building in the region. He cofounded Oenoverse with Blenheim Vineyards, an initiative that expands professional opportunities for those systemically excluded and underrepresented in the Virginia wine scene. Oenoverse collaborates with the nonprofit The Veraison Project, which supports industry mentorship, scholarships, and apprenticeships. "If wine is about culture," Leonard says, "then you look at the types of people who get access to make wines."

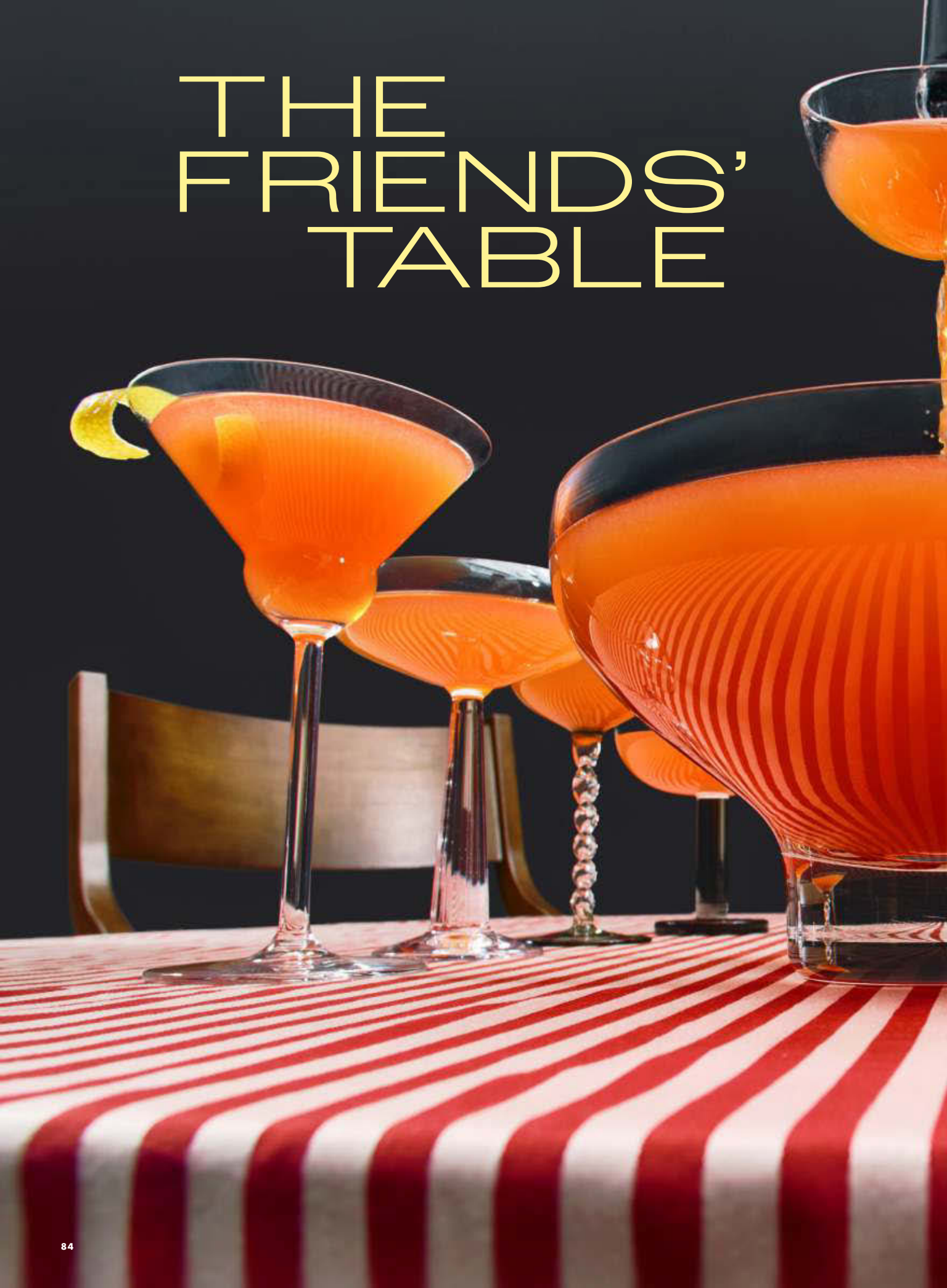
The partners at CWC had the same thought and launched an incubator program for prospective makers to develop their own boundary-pushing projects that reflect Virginia's range. The first cohort included Leonard and his business partner Lance Lemon. Their Parallax Project is a duo of white and red wines from the same grape blend. It features hybrids Chardonel and Vidal Blanc, with Tannat, Petit Manseng, Albariño, and Traminette, illustrating how the same ingredients can evoke different expressions while telling a specific Virginia story.

Marley has also collaborated with CWC, producing a series of wines, Love Echo. The offerings include a pét-nat style infused with foraged pawpaws. Lightwell Survey (the winery by the Jordan brothers) collaborated with New York sommelier Oniyx Acosta, whose nonprofit Co-Fermented now manages ABV Ferments. Jordan worked closely with Acosta on two wines from a base of Petit Manseng and Vidal Blanc—a still white infused with local pine cones, and a pét-nat infused with wine berries and Virginia wildflower honey. "In Virginia," Leonard says, "we're doing things with grapes that most others aren't doing."

Winemakers are diversifying, as is the American market. "People are less interested in hewing to the highly rated, so-called 'important' wines," Campbell says. "People are drinking based on deliciousness, not elitism."

Fruit and fermentation are known to every culture, and if we continue in this abundant direction, the breadth of American wine can represent endless ideas and flavors. "We're in a good place now," Jordan says. "And it's going to get better." ■

THE FRIENDS' TABLE



RECIPES BY KENDRA VACULIN

If Thanksgiving is a cook's holiday, then Friendsgiving is for the hosts. It's a gathering centered around community and offers every guest the chance to contribute, whether it's a dish or a drink, a centerpiece or a playlist. Here, we've gathered the best of our kitchen wisdom to answer your pressing alt–Turkey Day questions, shared decor picks fit for a feast, and of course, put together a menu that delivers on classic flavors while leaving elbow room for potluck dishes too. It's a dinner party everyone will be grateful for.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANDREW B. MYERS

FOOD STYLING BY MICAH MORTON.
PROP STYLING BY EMMA RINGNESS.

SET THE SCENE

Putting as much thought into the vibes as you do the food ensures your guests—friends, family, and plus-ones alike—all feel welcome at your table.
—Emily Farris, senior commerce writer

BETTER FOLDING CHAIRS

For the regular holiday host, folding chairs are the most sensible solution for flexing to fit as many guests as you want to invite, and great news, the options are sturdier, and more stylish, than ever. Chairs with solid wood frames like Crate & Barrel's Petrie Folding Chair ($359; crateandbarrel.com) and All Modern's Dan Rattan Folding Chair ($339; allmodern.com) cost more than metal or plastic, but they're practical investment pieces you'll pull out for dinner parties and game nights for years to come.

ASSIGNED SEATS

Practically speaking, assigned seating guarantees you have a clear path to the kitchen. But the real magic comes from strategically arranging guests to spark conversations. Plus, what's more welcoming than cozying up to a spot that's been set just for you? Decorative place card holders like The Object Enthusiast's Arch Name Holders ($88 for four; theobjectenthusiast.com) paired with luxe Golden Hour Place Cards ($60 for 24; dear annabelle.com) are an easy way to make your holiday table feel more festive, but a simple folded paper tent works too. Either way, if you're hoping to turn strangers into friends, do everyone a favor and write names on both sides of the card.

LESS-IS-MORE LIGHTING

Nothing sets—or ruins—dinner party ambiance quite like lighting, and if you want your home to feel more like a cozy wine bar than a Wendy's, you're going to need to step away from the light switch. Instead, layer a few softer light sources throughout your space, like West Elm's Ribbed Amber Glass Table Lamp ($99; westelm.com) and some taper candles. If you absolutely must use the ceiling light, swap out standard bulbs for smart LEDs you can program to various colors and tones. To easily switch between clear task lighting and glowy dinner party lighting, try Ecosmart's Clear Color Changing Smart Bulbs ($15; homedepot.com), which allow you to adjust the temperature and brightness with an app or your smart home device.

SCAN THIS QR CODE TO SEE MORE OF MY FAVORITE TABLEWARE, FOLDING CHAIRS, AND AMBIENT LIGHT SOURCES.

Swedish-Style Turkey Meatball
p.90
Feta and Sun-Dried Tomato Dip
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Asian Pear Salad
with Crispy Shallots
p.90

PAPER FLEET (PAPER PLANES FOR A CROWD)

14 SERVINGS

Confused about the addition of water to this otherwise robust crimson-hued cocktail? When making a big batch of a drink that would normally be shaken or stirred with ice, the recipe must include water to account for dilution—i.e., the water released by the ice into each individual drink. This has a huge impact on the final balance of flavors and alcoholic intensity, as melted ice can account for 15%–25% of a drink's total volume. Here, that means adding 1 cup water to ensure each drink is at peak enjoyability.

- 1¼ cups Amaro Nonino
- 1¼ cups Aperol
- 1¼ cups bourbon
- 1¼ cups fresh lemon juice
- Lemon twists (for serving)

Mix amaro, Aperol, and bourbon in a large freezer-safe airtight container (two 1-qt. containers work well). Freeze at least 3 hours and up to 1 week.

One hour before serving, remove container from freezer and stir in lemon juice and 1 cup water. Return to freezer and chill the remaining hour. (Mixture won't freeze in that time because of the alcohol content, but it will if left in the freezer much longer.) Transfer to a pitcher and chill until ready to serve.

To serve, pour cocktail into glasses and garnish each with a lemon twist.

FETA AND SUN-DRIED TOMATO DIP

MAKES ABOUT 2½ CUPS

A dip can lead so many lives. Use this simple combination to stave off hungry guests while you're putting the finishing touches on dinner, bulk out a loaded cheese plate to turn it into a more robust meal, or bring over to a friend's house to complete a potluck puzzle. It takes all of five minutes; you have nothing to lose, and only feta dip to gain. Any leftovers can be spread over bread to make a turkey sandwich, grilled cheese, or a loaded veggie toast. Or slather on crostini and serve with soup. It also works well as a sauce for pasta, loosened with pasta cooking liquid.

- 2 garlic cloves, finely grated
- 1 cup (packed) drained oil-packed sun-dried tomatoes (about 8 oz.)
- 1 Tbsp. Calabrian chile paste
- 7 oz. feta, crumbled
- ⅔ cup plain whole-milk yogurt
- Crudités and crackers (for serving)

Blend garlic, sun-dried tomatoes, and chile paste in a food processor until smooth. Add feta and yogurt and blend until combined and smooth. Transfer to a small bowl and serve with crudités and crackers for dipping.

DO AHEAD: Dip can be made 2 days ahead. Cover and chill.

ASIAN PEAR SALAD WITH CRISPY SHALLOTS

8 SERVINGS

If you've heard it once, you've heard it a million times: Your Thanksgiving table needs something fresh and crunchy to balance out all that richness. Asian pears are perfect for the role. In this salad, they lend fresh snap and a touch of honeyed flavor to balance a showering of herbs, chile, and fried shallots. It's one of those salads that tastes like more than the sum of its parts.

- ⅓ cup vegetable oil
- 2 large shallots, thinly sliced
- Kosher salt
- ¼ cup white wine vinegar
- 2 Tbsp. Dijon mustard
- 1 Tbsp. honey
- Freshly ground pepper
- 4 Asian pears, cored, cut into 3x½" sticks
- 1 Fresno chile, very thinly sliced
- 1 cup (packed) cilantro leaves with tender stems and mint leaves, plus more for serving

Heat oil in a small saucepan over medium-high. Cook shallots, stirring occasionally, until golden brown and crisp, 7–9 minutes. Pour through a fine-mesh sieve set over a small bowl. Remove sieve from bowl and sprinkle shallots with a big pinch of salt; toss to coat. Set fried shallots aside. Let oil cool slightly, then measure out ¼ cup shallot oil.

Whisk vinegar, mustard, and honey in a large bowl to combine. Gradually stream in ¼ cup shallot oil, whisking constantly until emulsified. Season dressing with salt and pepper.

Add pears to dressing and toss to coat. Add chile, 1 cup cilantro and mint, and most of reserved fried shallots and toss to combine. Top salad with more cilantro and mint and remaining fried shallots.

SWEDISH-STYLE TURKEY MEATBALLS

10 SERVINGS

Inspired by the culinary stylings of everyone's favorite Swedish furniture supplier, this dish of little meatballs is a complete meal that's so fun to make and eat as a group that it's likely to become an annual tradition in its own right. Instead of lingonberries, cranberries plus orange marmalade are cooked together to make an irresistible jam that will be the star of your meatball sandwich leftovers.

- 2 small onions, coarsely grated
- 2 cups panko
- ½ cup whole milk
- 2 large eggs
- 2 lb. ground turkey
- ½ tsp. ground allspice
- 3 tsp. Diamond Crystal or 1¾ tsp. Morton kosher salt, divided, plus more
- Freshly ground pepper
- 1 lb. fresh or frozen cranberries
- 1 cup orange marmalade (about one 13-oz. jar)
- 3 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- ⅓ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 4 Tbsp. unsalted butter
- ¼ cup all-purpose flour
- 1 Tbsp. balsamic vinegar
- 1 Tbsp. Worcestershire sauce
- 5 cups low-sodium chicken broth
- Chopped parsley and mashed potatoes (for serving)

Mix onions, panko, and milk in a large bowl to combine. Add eggs, turkey, allspice, and 2 tsp. Diamond Crystal or 1¼ tsp. Morton kosher salt; season generously with pepper. Mix well, then let sit 20 minutes for breadcrumbs to hydrate.

Meanwhile, heat cranberries, marmalade, lemon juice, and a pinch of salt in a large saucepan over medium-high until bubbling. Continue to cook, stirring occasionally and mashing to burst cranberries, until thickened and jammy, 10–12 minutes longer. Transfer jam to a small bowl (it will thicken more as it cools).

Heat oil in a medium Dutch oven or other heavy pot over medium. Working one at a time, scoop out golf-ball-size portions of meat mixture (it will be sticky, so use a #50 cookie scoop if you have one) and form into 1½"-diameter balls. Working in batches, arrange meatballs in a single layer in pot (about 12 per batch) and cook, turning halfway through with a slotted spoon and adjusting heat as needed if browning too quickly, until deeply browned on 2 sides, about 3 minutes. Transfer to a rimmed baking sheet as you go (meatballs will still be uncooked inside). Pour out any excess fat in pot and discard. Remove any charred bits remaining in pot if needed.

Melt butter in same pot over medium heat. Add flour and cook, whisking constantly, until golden brown, 3–4 minutes. Add vinegar, Worcestershire sauce, and 1 tsp. Diamond Crystal or ½ tsp. Morton kosher salt and season

generously with pepper; whisk to combine (mixture will seize and coagulate). Add ½ cup broth at a time, whisking constantly and incorporating completely after each addition before adding more (gravy will thicken and seize at first but smooth out as you go). Bring to a simmer (still over medium) and cook, stirring occasionally, until slightly thickened, 8–10 minutes.

Return meatballs to pot and cook, gently stirring occasionally with a heatproof rubber spatula (this will help to keep the meatballs from falling apart), until gravy thickens even further, 8–10 minutes.

Top meatballs and gravy with parsley; season with more pepper. Serve with mashed potatoes and cranberry jam.

DO AHEAD: Jam can be made 1 week ahead; cover and chill. Meatballs can be formed 1 day ahead; arrange in a single layer in an airtight container. Cover and chill.

Ready for dessert? Find our Pumpkin Tiramisu at bonappetit.com/recipe/pumpkin-tiramisu

THE TEST KITCHEN HOTLINE

FRIENDSGIVING EDITION

Our expert advice on how to turn Friendsgiving dreams into reality.

Q: I can't wait to throw Friendsgiving for the first time this year. Any words of wisdom to share?

A: It might seem like a lot, but you really can pull off a festive and fun gathering, I promise. The thing that people want the most is to hang out with each other, and as long as you're creating a space for that to happen, the food is kind of secondary. *—Kendra Vaculin*

Have two kinds of water, like still and sparkling water, because nothing floors guests more than when you offer them a choice. It already feels fancy. *—Shilpa Uskokovic*

Q: I'm the guest this year, and while I'm known for splashy dishes when I host, I now need something that can survive a trip on public transport. Hot casseroles or anything that needs refrigeration is out. What should I take?

A: I have an answer for you that you could even take through airport security: buttery homemade bread, like our Golden Sweet Potato Rolls, p.64. And I think whether you take them in a beautiful serving dish or simply wrapped in foil, good bread is always a welcome addition to the table. *—Kate Kassin*

Q: I'm hosting solo this year. How do I scale back the spread in a way that still seems special but is doable to cook by myself?

A: Think about your plate and divide it up based on the four flavors and textures that you feel like you must hit. I need one vegetable or fruit that's crunchy and has a fun addition, like our Asian Pear Salad, opposite. I need a mashed moment like a potato or squash. I need something bready. Think about your own boxes to tick and narrow it down to one star dish that fills each quadrant of your dream plate. *—K.V.*

Q: We have a truly tiny kitchen. How do we possibly accommodate everything we're cooking and keep all of the dishes our friends are contributing at a nice serving temperature?

A: I don't think you need to resort to any kind of theatrics or heroics. Have the group do a little inventory of what appliances are available to lend to the gathering. Is there an insulated cooler that can keep a casserole warm (if not piping hot)? A toaster oven, slow cooker, or air fryer? There's lots of different tools that could be used, and it could even be fun for some of the reheating to happen on a grill. *—Maggie Hoffman*

As a guest, you're bringing a complete dish and you're taking it (and its mess) away. That's part of the true meaning of Friendsgiving, right? So as the hosts, you just need to provide access to your stove and have a reheating triage system for the dishes that truly need to be served warm. Anything that can be served at room temperature should be. *—Chris Morocco*

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This majestic pecan pie will raise the bar on the holiday dessert table.
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PHOTOGRAPH BY TRAVIS RAINEY. FOOD STYLING BY THU BUSER. PROP STYLING BY LINDEN ELSTRAN.

Last Call

A little something to sip on from Epicurious's vast archives

SMOKE SHOW

RECIPE BY NATASHA DAVID
PHOTOGRAPH BY JOSEPH DE LEO

When the weather grows blustery and cold, it's time to go big on cozy cocktails. Lusciously creamy with warming spice notes, Natasha David's indulgent Smoke Show is a quintessential holiday season drink.

Here she uses equal parts bourbon and dark rum to build a caramelized boozy base. The spirits get tempered with smoky-sweet cinnamon syrup, heavy cream, and an orange liqueur like Grand Marnier. Pour the shaken mixture over crushed ice and garnish with a smoldering cinnamon stick—don't skip the aromatics! The result is a luxe cocktail you'll want to sip for dessert next to a roaring fire. —*Sam Stone*

Bring **five 3"-long cinnamon sticks**, **1 cup sugar**, and 1 cup water to a bare simmer in a small saucepan over medium heat, stirring until sugar is dissolved. Reduce heat as low as possible and cook 30 minutes (do not let it boil). Let cinnamon syrup cool. Strain into an airtight container; discard cinnamon sticks.

Combine **¾ oz. bourbon**, **¾ oz. dark rum**, **½ oz. Grand Marnier or other orange liqueur**, **½ oz. heavy cream**, and ½ oz. cinnamon syrup in a cocktail shaker and fill with ice. Cover and shake until outside is frosty, about 20 seconds. Strain cocktail into an old-fashioned glass filled with crushed ice; nestle **one 3"-long cinnamon stick** into ice. Using a kitchen torch or a match, heat exposed end of cinnamon just until it starts to smoke.

DO AHEAD: Cinnamon syrup can be made 2 weeks ahead. Cover and chill.

Makes 1

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FOOD STYLING BY MICAH MARIE MORTON

bon appétit

COOK WITH THE MASTERS ON OUR YOUTUBE CHANNEL

Chef **Jesse Ito**
On The Line,
"Only 16 People
a Night Can Eat
This 17-Course
Omakase"

PHOTOGRAPH BY IAN STROUD

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